


THE EYE SHIELD



Issue 58

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to issue 58 of The Eye Shield. It's now eight years since I took the helm of this ship, and to celebrate this momentous occasion, I recently agreed to take part in a no-holes-barred improview (conducted by renowned Eye Shield reporter Rosey Collins) about TES, Nightmare and other related subjects. It really is very interesting... at least, so far as I can tell!

But this is by no means the only treat in store for you this issue - you'll be brimful of fascination (or mild interest, at least) when you see the *Challenge Success Rates*; you'll be rushing to the telly and tuning in to CBBC when Rosey reveals some of the far better *Kids' TV Shows Other People are Growing Up With*; you'll be wallowing in '80s nostalgia once again, not only with me (and He-Man) in *Kids' TV Shows I Grew Up With*, but also with Gehr "Lex" Luthor in the much anticipated second instalment of *When We Were Very Young*; the tundra-dwelling author of *Scandinavian Nightmares* reveals some of the inspiration behind his epic tale in the first part of *Jon's notes*; Ross Thompson presents the fourth chapter of his *Adventure Time*; and you'll wonder just what Rio and Zyssa are getting themselves into when they arrive at Hubert Dracher's dodgy archery tournament as Ricky Temple presents the fourth chapter of *For Dungeon and Dungeon Master*. As ever, my sincere thanks go out to all my little helpers.

Here are some of Jim Waterman's reactions to issue 57.

The Ali Baba story - so the whole "Open barley" malarkey wasn't completely made up, then! When I was a nipper, I saw some kind of finger-puppet adaptation of this, and for years I've been convinced that I'd dreamed up the bit where Kasim tried "Open cinnamon" in an attempt to get in.

Ricky Temple's analysis of the theme tunes is exactly the kind of thing I like to see in TES. The main problem I had with the third version is that it had been mangled into a dull, straight 4/4 when the 6/8 of the original had far more impact to it. I've always thought that the original Nightmare theme tune was the greatest track that a power metal band never wrote.

As for The Mysterious Cities of Gold, I never saw it but I took one look at this... "*There are a few slightly iffy lines that perhaps didn't translate from French to English very well, which I'm sure must have been left in for a laugh!*" ...and now I have to see it, just for that!

Thanks once again for all your great feedback, Jim. I'm glad Rosey managed to clear up that possibly erroneous childhood memory for you. As for The Mysterious Cities of Gold, I would always recommend giving that a try, whether it's for the slightly iffy

lines, the fantastic characters, the marvellous epic adventure, or simply to wallow in '80s nostalgia.

Here is some of my bi-monthly fan mail from Ross Thompson. Remember, readers, if you like Raven, you really should check out Ross's fanzine - The Raven's Eye - at www.freewebs.com/ravenseyemag

I loved the conclusion to *Scandinavian Nightmares* – it was hilarious! *For Dungeon and Dungeon Master* is really good too, and is getting exciting now. I really liked *The Sound of Music* as well, and Ricky's interpretation of it.

Thanks for the great pics from the Weald and Downland Museum, and well done for all the effort you must go through to get the Greek references! It's very interesting to see in which series they were most used - for some reason they mostly appeared in the earlier series. All the regulars were great as usual, and I once again thank you for a great issue.

Cheers, Ross. It is indeed interesting to see that most of those Greek Mythology references (and, indeed, the Camelot and Robin Hood references from previous issues) come from the first four series. This is mainly because most references come in the form of riddles, which largely disappeared after series 4, which just goes to show the slightly different approach to medieval fantasy that the programme took from this point on.

Enjoy it while it's here - before it takes a much-needed hiatus, Nightmare QI returns to mete out its judgment once more. Here are the answers to Drassil's brain-drainers, and the scores of those of you who were brave enough to try answering them!

1. Which team was the last to be DISMISSED by Treguard?

Answer: Duncan's (Team 8 of Series 5).

Cliché: Kelly's (Team 9 of Series 5).

2. Which spell had the greatest number of different casters?

Answer: FLOAT. Three series 8 advisors (belonging to Daniel, Mike and Rebecca) cast this spell.

Alternative Answer: Almost as good an answer would be SWORD. You could argue that this spell also had three casters – Mogdred, Morghanna and Leo's spellcaster. This is assuming that Morghanna cast SWORD during Martin's quest, but there is no evidence that she cast the SWORD spell itself, unlike Mogdred - we know he did because Leo's advisors dispelled DWORS. Morghanna, though, may not have used the spell SWORD (after all, Hordriss used "Excalibur's Behest!"). Therefore there is a strong, but not conclusive, case for SWORD having three different casters, which is equal to the total for FLOAT.

3. Which of these is the odd one out: Samurai, Brollachan, Gretel, Grimwold or Dreadnort?

Answer: Dreadnort, because all the others were passwords. You could also say that Gretel is the only one who's wholly, entirely human, assuming we take the samurai's spectral nature into account.

4. Which three of these are the odd ones in: Sidriss, Puck, Majida, Pixel?

Answer: The odd three in are Puck, Majida and Pixel. While all four were trapped or stored in bottles, and indeed released, watchers never witnessed Sidriss's release. You could also say that Pixel is the only one who actually went INTO a bottle onscreen, or you could say that they were all trapped in bottles at some point, but Pixel was the only one who hadn't been condensed in size in some way before she went in. Bottles are the key to this question, anyway.

5. What does the sequence 19, 36, 39, 41, 40, 16, 30, 31 signify?

Answer: These are the issue numbers of all eight winning teams' Classic Quests in TES!

6. Which of these is the odd one out: gauntlet, horn, witch amber or jester's sceptre?

Answer: The horn is the odd one out. All these objects cost a team its quest when they were left behind, but the horn is the only one also to cost a team its quest when it *wasn't* left behind (Team 2 of Series 5).

7. What does the sequence 0, 6, 5, 4, 4, 3, 4, 4 signify?

Answer: The number of different quest objects that were requested for in each series.

Series 1: No quest objects. **Series 2:** Sword, Shield, Crown, Cup, Talisman, Maid.

Series 3: Sword, Shield, Crown, Cup, Maid. **Series 4, 5, 7 and 8:** Sword, Shield,

Crown, Cup. **Series 6:** Sword, Shield, Crown.

8. Which of these is the odd one out: Temporal Disruption, Walls of Jericho, the writing on the wall, Powers That Be or Behemoth?

Answer: Temporal Disruption. All the others are derived from Biblical references.

Cliché: To say that any one of them is the odd one out because Treguard does not say it just as or after someone dies. "Walls of Jericho" and "writing on the wall" are the only two that would actually fit into this category, plus the fact that Treguard actually said them all is mere coincidence in terms of the question.

9. How many non-winning teams had two episodes entirely to themselves?

Answer: Eight teams - Richard I (Team 6 of Series 1), Helen II (Team 1 of Series 4), Giles (Team 8 of Series 4), Alan (Team 3 of Series 6), Sofia (Team 6 of Series 6), Chris IV (Team 7 of Series 6), Simon IV (Team 1 of Series 7) and Daniel II (Team 2 of Series 8). A lot of other quests have at least the equivalent runtime of two episodes, but they have only one whole episode to themselves and share two others with other teams. It helps to be at the beginning or end of a series for this, as in the case of Richard, Helen, Giles, Chris and Simon. Only Alan, Sofia and Daniel took up two whole episodes with another team on either side, with only Alan and Daniel not ending at Temporal Disruption at the end of their second whole episode.

Cliché: Seven teams, overlooking Chris by not realising that he occupied the whole of his first episode.

10. Name the odd one out: Mellisandre, Lord Fear, Lissard, Raptor.

Answer: Raptor, as all the other characters had middle names that were revealed to the watchers, albeit in Nightmare VR in Lord Fear's case.

Alternative Answers: It is true but boring to say that Mellie is the only one who didn't appear in series 7 and 8. It's also true but boring to say that Lord Fear is the only one whose appearances didn't take place entirely in two consecutive series. It would be fair enough to say that Mellie is the only one who's not a member of the Opposition - while it might be ambiguous to group earlier characters like Olaf and Fatilla under that heading, Fear, Lissard and Raptor were always definitively shown as being Opposition members.

Rank	Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
1	Gehn L	3	4	3	2	1	2	1	1	4	3	24
2	Liam C	1	1	4	2	1	4	4	0	2	1	20
3	Ross T	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	2	3	3	14

Congratulations to Gehn "Lex" Luthor, who retains the revered title of Nightmare QI Champion!

JAKE COLLINS IMPROVIEW

With Rosey Collins

RC: What made you decide to re-launch The Eye Shield?

JC: The Eye Shield had been absent from our lives for many years, and I had often hoped that Paul McIntosh would re-launch it, particularly when the Knightmare website came about, because it would be easier to do with the internet - and sometimes Paul would write and say that perhaps he was going to start up The Eye Shield again, but it never actually happened - and of course, Paul was and is a very busy person so one day I thought: Well, why don't *I* do it? I think there's still a tremendous market for The Eye Shield... I thought - I might not have been right about that - but I thought The Eye Shield had so much it hadn't explored, and so much more it could do for the world of Knightmare nostalgia - so many more articles and features that *needed* to be read by the Knightmare-loving community. So that's why I thought I'd email Nicholas to see it was feasible. And... it was!

How long have you been making new issues of The Eye Shield now?

Exactly eight years, Rosey.

When you first started, did you expect it to go on for eight years plus?

Um, yes, because I knew I'd still write it even though nobody ever read it.

(Laughs.) Really? For eight years?

Well... I never thought it might end after this amount of time, or that amount of time - I just thought I'd get on with it and see what happened. I actually discussed with Nicholas making it monthly at one point, rather than bimonthly.

That would have been a lot of hard work, wouldn't it?

Yes, it would - we agreed it would be better to keep it bimonthly.

You carried on a lot of the regular... er... *things* that Paul used to put in The Eye Shield - do you have a particular favourite?

Not really. (Laughs.) They're all brilliant, you see. I didn't want to bring The Eye Shield back as some kind of parody, or bastardisation of the original, because all the original features are great. I hate things that change for the sake of it - so I thought I would continue the regular features as they were, pretty much, because that was what made the

magazine so great and that was what still needed to be explored - and I sort of adapted Remember This and Him into Creature Feature as well, but it's pretty much the same thing. And obviously I've tried to put a lot of myself into the magazine, so that it's not just a re-telling of what happened in Knightmare without sort of personal views, because it's a fanzine, so I wanted to do it from a personal point of view. So I've never tried to make it *exactly* like the old one, but I've tried to carry it on in the spirit - the same way as the old one.

Yes, you have a lot of personal points of view about Knightmare because you're a very big Knightmare fan, aren't you?

That's correct.

Do you have a...? You've probably got more than one, but can you tell me a few favourite Knightmare moments?

I like the bit where Julian is hiding behind the shield, and Treguard's going, "Whaaaaooooa! You have to look away from the mirror!" And they're all going, "Oooh-hur-hur-hur!" (Laughs.) Another awfully fun bit is where Simon, in series four, sidesteps into the hole in the Block and Tackle - fantastic comedy moment there. Another thing that used to make me laugh was an episode in series five where Treguard and Pickle, at the end, are having one of their stupid conversations - and Treguard goes, "Calm down, you'll frighten the watchers. There, you *have* frightened them! Hey, you lot! Don't forget to join us for the resumption of hostilities - BAH! They've gone."

Yes... the problem with that is that it's a stupid ending. Series five has got stupid beginnings and stupid endings, and I hate that. Do you have any opinion on that?

They don't age well, do they? As a child I think you don't mind them, and you chuckle along with them, but you pointed out to me it's not a very good way to start and round off the show - sort of Chuckle Brothers moments between Treguard and Pickle - and it's not as good... or in keeping with the dark atmosphere... series four is better, where they just have a little chat, and then get on with it. That said, I don't much like Pickle flicking through the book in series six, they're just showing off their computer graphics - but anyway...

Some would say that Knightmare, from the beginning, was just showing off its computer graphics.

Well, Knightmare was a groundbreaking thing in the world of computers.

You see them using blue screen now in shows like *Heroes*, and *Merlin*, and they're saying, "Oooh, look at our fantastic new special effects!" But *Knightmare* was using it over twenty years ago - a world of computer wizardry, and very effectively done... Actually, while we're on the subject, I prefer Treguard introducing the show with no assistance *at all*, but there we are.

I think most people would agree with you on that. You mentioned *Merlin* - a quite, very new show on BBC1. Do you like it?

Well, I like it better than *Robin Hood*.

(Laughs.) That's not saying much, is it?

No. It's very sort of trite, and not nearly as good as the BBC thinks it is, but they've had some quite interesting ideas to re-work the legend, I suppose. I think Richard Wilson as Gaius is rather good - he's managed to make me interested in the character...

And what about Anthony Head as Uther?

Great man, but he's got very little to work with in this series. When they do give him something, he does a good job. All his back story, and his wife dying in childbirth, and why he hates magic, and how much he misses Buffy, and that sort of thing...

(Laughs.) So apart from *Knightmare*, what are your other favourite shows?

Lots of them. My favourite thing in the world, before I encountered *Knightmare*, was *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*. I'm sure I've seen many other shows since then that I might have liked more than that. *Grange Hill*, a definitive children's show, brilliant... at times. *The Mysterious Cities of Gold* is an enchanting magical mystery -

I don't like it.

Well you've only watched eight episodes... which is, granted, a bit of a slow pace, but absolutely enthralling. *Count Duckula*, very funny show - "Yes, Nanny"; *Thundercats*, Mumm-Ra's brilliant; *Dogtanian and the Three Muskehounds* - brilliant, brilliant piece of television; *The Animals of Farthing Wood*... that was good. *Sooty* - everyone loves a bit of *Sooty*. *The Dreamstone*, I liked Zordrak. "BLOB!" *Hey Arnold*, possibly the most rounded cartoon ever; *Bravestarr*, and his cool powers; *Incredible Games*! Absolutely brilliant, particularly the Dark Knight - "Move!" *Tiny Toon Adventures* - we used to love *Tiny Toon Adventures*, great stuff.

Time Busters - *Time Busters* wasn't as good as *Knightmare*, but it was very entertaining. *Fun House* was a bit... rubbish, really, but it was rather fun, particularly when they got the Power Prize (does rooster impression). *Blazing Dragons*! *Blazing Dragons* was brilliant - well, the first series was, and the second series was rather different.

It was good for what it was, but it wasn't as good as the first series, shall we say?

Yes, so there are some of the old shows I used to enjoy. *Fantastic Max*! "Rocket and Roll!" Well, that's the bit I used to wait for.

Yes - anyone who's read *The Eye Shield* has probably picked up that all your favourite shows are from the late eighties/early nineties. But you do still watch television now, don't you? Even though they're not as good as the old shows, what are some of the newer shows you like?

Raven was a brilliant piece of work when it first started, and then it developed into something even better, but I really think it's dropped off in recent years - but it's certainly the best thing CBBC has produced for many years. They've also managed to produce quite recently *Trapped*, which is rather good. "You are the saboteur!" And that's rather fun. This thing *Election* that you've been watching is, er... laudable. But one show that I did get into, sort of post-millennium - also from CBBC, though not made by CBBC - is *Mona the Vampire*, which shows us that imagination is a great thing, and shouldn't be under-valued. When we were young we used to play very imaginative games, didn't we?

Yes, just like *Mona* does in the show. She hasn't really got vampire powers at all - they make it all up.

That's right - and it's a show that sometimes people object to on the Internet Movie Database and YouTube and things...

Do they?

...because they think *Mona*'s completely mad.

Well, she is a bit, isn't she?

Well, what's wrong with being completely mad? The alternative is to grow up and become completely boring, which is something I think we should all try to avoid doing for as long as possible. So that's why I like *Mona the Vampire*. The character of *Mona* is very good - a very strong character. You could easily find her completely unlikeable, in which case you wouldn't

like the show, but if you like her headstrong, sassy way of looking at things, you might enjoy it.

I like Mona because I relate to Mona, because she gets out her Vampire Diary and she writes these fantastic stories - and I used to sit and write stories using a pen and a notebook, and it's something I don't really do anymore.

Yes, she's a good character - someone we should all aspire to be like.

Going back to Nightmare - who's your favourite character?

When I was young, and starry-eyed, and not quite sure whether the whole thing was real or not - I was only small when it started - my favourite character was undoubtedly Merlin. He would turn up in a brilliant flash of lightning, and be all powerful and mystical with his long white beard and things - that's what I always think Merlin should be like. Of course as I've watched it over the years, I've become very fond of other characters. Treguard holds the whole show together; Motley is awfully fun; Hordriss transcends many different aspects of Nightmare, and is always good to watch - it's the characters that stick around longer that I tend to get fond of, but I think my definitive favourite character does have to be Merlin, because that's what it was in the old heady days of the late eighties, and he colours my idea of Merlin to this day.

Okay, controversial question now. Is your favourite series of Nightmare series three?

No. I can see why people like it - it has its very own definitive atmosphere - but for me, it's not as good as series two, which is the original Nightmare - series one - with the lumps and bumps ironed out, and everything working as it should, before they start changing it too much - it's the original Nightmare that I remember from those early days, and I always remember being enthralled by... series three was part of that too, but I do prefer series two. Similarly I'm very fond of series four, because it was the first one we recorded, but in general I prefer the darker atmosphere of the Dungeon-based early series - and I think series two is the peak of that.

I've got an interesting question for you now. The Dungeon has got in it things like witches and knights and things that you would probably associate with medieval folklore, and it's also got creatures in it, like for example dragons. And if someone said to you, what sort of creature would you most expect to find in a sort of... medieval,

Camelot legend-ish gameshow, you'd probably say dragons, wouldn't you?

Yes, I think you would. Dragons are the definitive mythical creatures that everyone recognises - they don't go, "Oh, what the hell is that?" "It's a hippogriff." No, no, no - everyone can recognise a dragon.

Mmm - you wouldn't say goblin, would you?

No, I wouldn't say goblin.

So why do you think goblins in Knightmare are so enduring that they made it through from series three right to the end?

Well, it's a very good question, and one that you could debate for ages. In series three, I think the production team made a conscious effort to introduce new threats to try and hurry dungeoneers out of rooms, which we hadn't seen in series one and two -

Except for the Automatum.

Apart from the Automatum - just forget about the Automatum for this answer. So they made the skull ghosts, they made the armoured knight, they made the ogre - with his different coloured trousers - and they made the goblins.

And bats.

And bats, yes, that's right. Now with your goblins, you got a very easily recognisable sign that they were on the way, with the goblin horn. They scuttle into the chamber, they look threatening, they've got their clubs, they're ugly, they're brown, they're short - you are getting a definite threat - warning, and resolution. And this situation became synonymous with Knightmare itself. The skull ghosts stuck around for a while, but then they decided they'd make something a bit more impressive with their computer programmes, so they turned it into a stormgeist; the knight and the ogre were never that threatening - they were obviously just a man wandering round, going "Raaaaah!" - but the goblins had their own particular style, so that's why they were the series three threat that was enduring and stuck around because they worked the best.

Was a goblin the first thing that got made to look big?

There were the snakes in series one and two...

Oh, I didn't think of that.

But making the goblin look big to get the hobgoblin was a brilliant effect,

with Martin.

Yes, that was quite exciting, wasn't it? Tell us what you think about subsequent hobgoblin appearances, because I happen to know that's a very interesting point.

Yes, it is very interesting, isn't it? They're disappointing. After seeing Martin and his hobgoblin appearance - which is something I always remembered, even when we didn't have it on video - I didn't remember it was Martin, but I remembered Treguard going, "Aaaah, a hobgoblin in the level!" - and of course it comes, and oh it's so huge, because it's put next to a regular goblin, and ooh, dear! Heart-stopping moments there. But then subsequent hobgoblin appearances are somewhat token. Series five: Tiny turns up, Gate Master gets rid of him, it's just to fill in a bit of time in the final episode of the series. It's impressive looking, yes, the dungeoneer looks to be in danger - but she's not really, it's just a bit of filler, and -

It's not going to do anything, is it, because the Gate Master gets rid of it.

It looks good, but it's a bit disappointing. Series six, and eight, the hobgoblin sits there. That's all. Sits there during Hordriss's magic class; sits there during the opening scene of series eight with all the rest of the Opposition - and they don't do anything. Hobgoblins should have appeared in the Dungeon more, presenting a threat - could have had a nice spell to use against them, could have done all sorts of things with them - but they didn't.

Let's go back to The Eye Shield. Is there anything you'd like to say to your readers?

Thank you for reading The Eye Shield, readers. I really do appreciate it when I see that someone has read what I've written, and enjoyed it in some small way - it makes the whole thing worthwhile. I'm particularly grateful to Ross Thompson, who's really restored my faith in The Eye Shield's popularity, and that the venture is worthwhile. Being young, and excited by Knightmare he's seen on Challenge... I think Ross has reminded me of myself, when I first read The Eye Shield when it was produced by Paul.

I think we could probably wrap this up now. Do you want to make an appeal for more reader contributions and e-mails and feedback and things?

If you've read The Eye Shield, and it's sparked some reaction from you, e-mail me about it - or post in the designated Eye Shield section of the forum... and then I'll know that someone out there, in Nightmare Land, has appreciated what I've created.

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 1/2/3. Level 2.

THE CLUE ROOM

I really do love the dark, sinister atmosphere that pervaded Knightmare's early series, drawing Watchers of all ages into the show with a tantalising mixture of fascination, excitement and fear. The level two clue room from the first three series really epitomises that atmosphere for me, not least because it was one room that I always remembered - it almost became a microcosm of the whole of the first three series inside my mind. Yet what is so sinister about a blue/grey chamber with a couple of doors and a table? You may well ask, and I shall attempt to explain.

There always seemed to me to be a lingering aura of threat in this room, not least because choosing the wrong objects from the table would undoubtedly mean imminent death for the team. The main reason for my own personal reaction to this room, though, is its status as a popular hangout for cavernwraiths during series 2 - I always found these creatures very scary. Even during its ghost-free appearances, the clue room played host to some pretty unnerving scenes - Mogdred taunting Chris I; Hordriss appearing on the wall and laughing sinisterly... even the oracles were a bit scary to me in those days, as was the disembodied voice of Casper the Key.

Yes, ask me to think of my earliest experiences of Knightmare and the clue room is the first thing that pops into my mind. Whether or not you feel the same way about the atmosphere of the room, there can be no denying that it was a very important place in the context of the quest; just think how many teams' fates were sealed in that clue room. Claire died in the room itself, within the ghostly folds of one of those chilling wraiths, while Tony and Stuart made fatal mistakes when choosing clue objects. Even Simon II could have done without visiting this particular room - that stupid amulet turned him into a star and made maneuvering practically impossible!

So, to sum up, if you want a good old-fashioned bit of Knightmare atmosphere, you need look no further than the original level two clue room!

Difficulty: 4 Several object-related errors were made here.

Killer Instinct: 5 Those hauntings could be deadly, and one of them was!

Gore Factor: 4 That ribcage of Neil's was quite gory...

Fairness: 9 Should always have been simple enough.

ADVENTURE TIME

By Ross Thompson

The Dungeon is in the midst of a fearsome power struggle, and dungeoneer Matthew is in a decidedly sticky situation. Will he survive? It's over to Ross Thompson to reveal all...

Queen Kalina struggles in her cage of skeletron bones as Lord Fear gloats. Sylvester Hands enters the room.

"What should I do with this woman, ya Lordship?"

"Lock her in level one, behind a rune lock. Make sure no-one knows the combination."

"And for this dungeoneer?"

"Call the goblins."

Goblins quickly swarm around Matthew, leading to a very nasty death.

"Ooh, nasty!" Treguard remarks. "Looks like some dragon magic from Smirkenorff could have been useful here. Oh well - here's some consolation magic for you. Spellcasting: D-I-S-M-I-S-S."

The next dungeoneer is called Danny. He has just called his advisors - Yartej, Julie and Amanda - when Hordriss appears on Treguard's screen.

"Treguard," says Hordriss, "I must warn you, this phase of the Dungeon is drawing to a close. You have three shifts left. If we are to have a victory, now would be an ideal time. With Queen Kalina still in Lord Fear's clutches, Mogdred and Morghanna struggling for power in level two, and Lord Fear growing ever more powerful in level three, we need a victory! Mogdred and Lord Fear have started a battle against each other. This should weaken both forces and give us more chance... however, it may mean that they grow more powerful. Your dungeoneer must destroy the armies that Mogdred and Lord Fear are both creating. Set aside all quest objects for now - even the reach wand - and set your sights on destroying these foes."

Treguard speedily sends Danny into the Dungeon.

"Where am I?"

"You are in a small cave," Yartej tells Danny, "and it's long and green. Someone is sitting in a throne at the end of the cave."

"Now, team," Treguard begins, "this is Mount Fear. Its usual inhabitant has long since left for some deep cavern down in level three. The new ruler of level one was Queen Kalina, until she was whisked away by the Opposition..."

The man in red robes turns round.

"Come over here, dungeoneer," he beckons. "I am Hordriss, and I am now the only one trying to restore peace to the Dungeon. Queen Kalina's magic is the only thing that can save the Dungeon from complete destruction. The Opposition has captured Queen Kalina and the only thing that can save her now is the reach wand, which can unlock the runes that she has been locked behind. Find the reach wand and then call me by my calling name three times. My calling name is Malefact. Now, may good luck and good haste be with you."

"Now, team, guide him out - it looks like some goblins have escaped from the lower levels!" Treguard warns.

"Walk forward," Yartej guides. "Stop. Sidestep right. Keep going."

"Where am I?"

The team have reached a bomb room, although the fuse is not yet lit.

"I think we'd better get you out of there pronto," Amanda says, "so please walk forward, turn left and walk forward again."

The fuse lights.

"WALK FORWARD, QUICKLY!"

Danny narrowly escapes the explosion. He has now reached the welcome clue room, with two doors leading out, one to the left and one to the right. As soon as Danny has reached the table, Phelheim's face manifests on the wall.

"I have three riddles, and truth is what I seek," says the wall monster. "Give me three truths and you may be aided in your quest. Here is my first. Mary's father has four children. Three are called Nana, Nene and Nini. What is the fourth called?"

"It's got to be Nono," Julie says. "Say Nono, Dan..."

"NO!" Amanda shouts. "Let's think about this. Mary's father has four children, so the fourth child must be Mary! Say Mary, Danny!"

"Mary."

"Truth accepted. Here comes my second. Now tell me - how many lives does a cat have?"

"It's nine," Yartej answers quickly.

"Nine."

"Truth accepted. Here is my third. I can come in the day, but more often at night. When I arrive, I can be heavy or light. What am I?"

"A type of star or something?" Amanda wonders.

"No, it's sleep!" Yartej answers. "Say sleep, Danny!"

"Sleep!"

"Truth accepted. Three is the score, you may know more. You may wish to throw a spanner in the works. Rock I was and rock I now..."

"Quickly, team you have a perfect score, so shout *I command you* and gain your bonus!" Treguard urges.

"I command you," Danny chants.

"Oh, very well..." Phelheim is forced to agree. "The bell shall only wake evil. Rock I was, and rock I now become."

The wall turns back to normal.

"Take the gold and the spanner, Danny," Yartej says, without much thinking. The team guides Danny out of the room.

Danny enters a small Dungeon chamber with one door leading off. Gumboil guards the way. He asks for the password, which - of course - they do not have. They try to bribe him with the gold.

"Just this once, mind you," says Gumboil. "Go on, be off with you... before I change my mind!"

Next, Danny walks into the ruthless Dungeon killer, the Corridor of Blades!

"Not fair, Master!" Pickle moans. "Do all our dungeoneers have to face this challenge?"

"I'm afraid so, Pickle," Treguard explains. "The Opposition are trying all they can now to get Danny out of the way. Although, it is surely too quick to handle!"

"Walk left, Danny!" Julie guides. "Quicker!"

Danny just dodges a blade. It is too hard for them.

"Throw the spanner down!"

Danny throws the spanner down and the blades slow down a little.

"Now, duck!"

"Left - quickly, quickly! Duck!"

A blade appears right in front of Danny. There is no time to move.

"Jump!"

Danny jumps and has another narrow escape. A monk comes out of a door.

"Well done, young dungeoneer. I collect proverbs, you know. Gift me a proverb, and some help will be yours..."

Will Brother Strange consent to aid Danny? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

CHALLENGE SUCCESS RATES

This is an idea that I must confess to stealing from The Eye Shield's sister fanzine, The Raven's Eye. Thank you for the inspiration, Ross - I'm sure that our two fanzines will continue to exchange ideas for many years to come. The table below gives details of just how successful some of Knightmare's puzzles and traps were at killing off dungeoneers, proportionally speaking.

This is a very different kettle of fish to a simple list of how many victims each challenge has, of the kind that has been featured in previous issues. It is common knowledge, for example, that the causeways have the most victims of any puzzle, yet as a percentage of the total number of attempts that were made to cross a causeway, this is perhaps not all that impressive a total!

This is the kind of thing that Ross calls "random but interesting" and I hope that you will find it at least mildly so. It is perhaps more relevant to make a table such as this for Raven challenges than for Knightmare challenges, as failing challenges on Raven is a somewhat more frequent occurrence, in that failure does not (typically) also mean immediate elimination, as with Knightmare. However, I have done it anyway, so I hope you enjoy it!

The percentage column refers to the successful attempts at the challenge - statistically speaking, you have about that much of a chance of completing the challenge without dying. (If you want to know the percentage of teams that failed the challenge, I'm sure you've already worked out what to do - take the percentage in the table away from one hundred, of course.) All percentages are worked out to the nearest whole number.

Challenge	Series	Attempts made	Attempts failed	Team Success Rate	Victims
Block and Tackle	4	6	3	50%	Simon III, Vicky, Jeremy
Play Your Cards Right	7, 8	5	2	60%	Simon IV, Alex II
Corridor of Blades	4, 5, 6, 7, 8	11	4	64%	Alistair, Sarah, Duncan, Daniel

Medusa	2, 3	3	1	67%	Chris I
Raining Fireballs	8	3	1	67%	Nathan
Trial by Spikes	7	6	2	67%	Naila, Ben III
Broken Path	3	4	1	75%	James
Causeways	5, 6	26	6	77%	Catherine, Alex I, Jenna, Matt, Alan, Sofia
Rune Locks	8	5	1	80%	Richard III
Quicksand	3	6	1	83%	Gavin
Bomb Rooms	1, 2, 3	21	3	86%	Danny, Martin I, Douglas
3 Steps	3	7	1	86%	Scott
Descender	5	8	1	88%	Duncan
Chess	2	5	0	100%	
Feline Fire	3	2	0	100%	
Fireball Alley	8	5	0	100%	
Fire Room	7	3	0	100%	
Fire Stones	2, 3	6	0	100%	
Hall of Spears	1, 2, 3	9	0	100%	
Lasers	2, 3	5	0	100%	
Mills of Doom	2, 3	6	0	100%	
Monster's Stomach	1, 2, 3	4	0	100%	
Moving Keyhole	1	2	0	100%	
Pick a Card	2	3	0	100%	
Sliding Floor	7, 8	4	0	100%	
Swinging Pendulum	2	1	0	100%	
Transporter Pad	4	2	0	100%	

PUZZLE PAGE ONE
Knightmare Wipeout I

That connoisseur of fine gameshows, Challenge TV, never fails to provide me with inspiration for Nightmare puzzles, and this time the show I am shamelessly ripping off is Wipeout, the category-based general knowledge quiz presented by Paul Daniels, and later Bob Monkhouse. Each of the two grids below contains twelve answers, six of which fit into the category at the bottom and six of which don't. Identify all six correct answers if you can, chalking up cumulative amounts of theoretical money as you go (£10 for the first answer, £20 for the second, £30 for the third etc) up to a possible £210 for each grid, but just remember this - one wrong answer will wipe you out completely, so be careful!

Treguard	Sidriss	Pickle	Motley
Olaf	Merlin	Hordriss	Smirky
Hands	Lissard	Skarkill	Gumboil

FOUR OR MORE SERIES

Merlin	Mogdred	Lillith	Motley
Velda	Morghanna	Hordriss	Hands
Dwarf	Grimaldine	Romahna	Malice

ALL THREE LEVELS

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 2

Quest: The Crown.

Dungeoneer: Jamie Wilkinson.

Advisors: Paul, Saranjit and Joseph.

Home town: Leeds, West Yorkshire.

Team score: 6 out of 10.

I have discussed the unfairness of this team's demise many times before, so I don't intend to get bogged down in that particular subject here. I will, however, just reaffirm my belief that Jamie and friends lost the game through no real fault of their own, at least so far as I can tell.

Level One: After pulling the lever at the Wheel of Fate, Jamie meets Folly on a narrow ledge of rock. The team endure some pointless banter from the jester before answering a simple question - the Knave of Hearts was the one who stole the tarts, as everybody knows. Folly tells the team that the felonious red jack became a black jack after he was caught, and that they should look out for him on their journey. Jamie then grabs an item of food as he dashes across a bomb room, before arriving in a chamber where he is forced to Pick a Card. The advisors have obviously remembered Folly's hint, as they quickly direct Jamie to unlock the door that is blocked by the Jack of Spades.

The clue room follows, where Igneous is on guard. Thanks to some serious prompting from Treguard, Jamie and friends manage to gain a perfect score, meaning that they have little trouble in selecting a humbug jar and a bag of small change from the clue table. A quick stroll past the Lion's Head and the Lasers leads to the Troll's chamber, where Jamie opens the humbug jar (after another prompt from Treguard) and summons a swarm of bees, which sting the Troll while Jamie escapes. He then arrives in Mildread's cave, and steals an item of food while the witch is asleep. Mildread wakes up and gives the team some heavy hints about dropping the bag of small change into the cauldron, which Jamie duly does. The cauldron transforms into a wellway, which Jamie uses to descend to level two.

Level Two: Jamie lands in Cedric's chamber. As usual, the acid-tongued monk is in a foul mood, and poses the team three riddles. Again, they get a perfect score. Their reward is an escort from Cedric, although it is a

very short one, as Cedric stays behind in the Corridor of the Catacombs to see off a toadadile. Jamie crosses the bridge over the Vale of Worms, chased by the Automatum. He then arrives in a room that has three broken spell parts scattered across the floor, but the Automatum arrives before he has time to collect them all - for what it's worth, I'm absolutely certain that no team could have done this in the time available to them! (*"Too late, team, too late, exit now or you perish!"* - **Treguard**.) Given no choice but to abandon the spell, Jamie is directed out quickly.

The clue room follows. Not unusually, it is being haunted by a cavernwraith. The wraith speaks to Jamie, begging him to release it from the magical hold of a talisman that is on the clue table. Jamie releases the wraith; the grateful ghost rewards him with the spell FREE. Next comes Ariadne's lair. All three doors have been blocked by webs, and Gretel is trapped behind one of them! The maid's plaintive cries for help are answered, as the team decide to cast FREE. Gretel runs over and thanks Jamie for releasing her, as Ariadne casually reobstructs the door with a new web. Gretel tells Jamie to use the MEDAL spell to escape before she runs off, but of course the team don't have that spell and they are totally trapped! (*"It's a tangled web we weave and unfortunately, you've trapped yourselves right in it!"* - **Treguard**.) Well, actually it was more your fault than theirs, Treguard, but there we are, what can you do?

Summary: A competent, fairly engaging team that perhaps deserved to reach level three.

FOR DUNGEON AND DUNGEON MASTER

By Ricky Temple

"Now, my little masterpiece... you're not going to give me any trouble today, are you?"

"That left hand of yours looks badly damaged. I think we'll concentrate on replacing that today. What do you think?"

Rio Bolt woke up with a start in a cold sweat, the image of that demented apothecary's face still before his eyes.

"Damn that woman... someday I'll find her and when I do... she is going to suffer!" he seethed.

He looked down at his now metal left hand and flexed it. He then looked around the room; sunlight was streaming in through the curtains. He and his partner Zyssa Silverdale had arrived in the small town of Bruin late the night before, having ridden nonstop since departing Dunshelm. They had found accommodation in this small inn to try and get a few hours' sleep before the tournament. Rio got out of bed and got dressed, in the robes of a militiaman, making sure he had nothing on him that identified him as a Dungeon Ranger. He then had a quick wash, splashing some of the water from the bowl that was on the table in his room over his face. He then made his way out of the room and walked the short distance to the door of Zyssa's room.

Rio knocked on the door. "Zyssa, time to go. The tournament is due to start today."

The door opened and Zyssa stepped out. She was dressed in a plain dress and - like Rio - had nothing on her to signify her true role.

"Ready," she said softly.

Rio could see the nerves in her eyes, which was not surprising since this was her first assignment. Rio gently patted her shoulder.

"It'll be fine," he said reassuringly.

She smiled and nodded, and followed him downstairs. They paid for their

rooms, got their horses from the stables, and set off for Hubert Dracher's estate.

At the estate itself, Dracher was showing the woman he believed to be Countess Jane Mercurio around the grounds where the tournament would take place.

"No expense has been spared, my dear Jane. The targets have been specially hand crafted by only the best tradesmen, the arrows made by a renowned craftsman, and only the greatest archers in the realm have been invited."

"Oh yes, Hubert, I'm sure it will prove to be a most entertaining display," Lady Mercury replied, trying to maintain her disguise by feigning interest in what Dracher was saying.

For nearly two months now, she had had to endure his odious and tedious company as she cultivated the persona of Countess Jane Mercurio and gained accesses to his household and - more importantly - his trust. Now, with the trap so close to being sprung, she was anxious to drop the whole pretence as soon as possible, and this tour Dracher was taking her on was so dreary.

"I thought I'd got away from this sort of upper-class, monotonous drivel when I escaped my *beloved* father and mother *dearest!*" she groaned to herself.

Just then, out of the corner of her eye, she saw her salvation from more boredom. "Oh, darn. Please excuse me, my dear Hubert, but I believe my servant has a message for me."

She quickly disentangled her arm from his and moved with a degree of speed - though not enough to seem suspicious - in the direction of a figure standing at the other end of the garden, who appeared to be trying to attract her attention. Dracher - put out at being disturbed - was about to follow and protest, but one of his own servants appeared.

"What is it?" he snapped.

"Master Dracher, sir, the guests - they are starting to arrive."

Dracher silently cursed to himself and indicated for the servant to leave him. The servant bowed and departed. Dracher looked once more after the 'Countess', who was standing and talking to the person she had told him was her bodyguard. He was - according to her - a mute, and communicated through gestures and some sounds. This time, however, he was handing her a parchment with some kind of message written on it.

"He looks more like a common street thug," Dracher sneered, remembering when he had first seen this bodyguard. He had black hair and was of average height, but his build betrayed his likely proficiency in a fight. His upper physique was very muscular and well developed. He was - unlike his employer - dressed very shabbily, with faded grey pants and a tatty sheepskin vest that was also grey and faded. However, the most striking thing about him was the very visible scar that ran the full length of his throat and was most likely the reason for his muteness, as it was obvious to even an unskilled eye (let alone to one as skilled as Dracher's) that it was the work of a knife of some sort.

"Probably severed the brute's vocal cords," he mused, as he regarded the scene for a few more moments and watched them both head off in the opposite direction. He cursed again (both Countess Mercurio's bodyguard and his own servant for interrupting them) and then turned and walked briskly to greet the first competitors and guests who were arriving.

"Quite a grand estate, isn't it?" Zyssa said to Rio, as they approached the main gate.

"Hmm, Dracher's obviously put his bloodstained and ill-gotten gains to some use... and they say crime doesn't pay," Rio replied as he looked towards the gate, where there was a man collecting invites and entrance fees. "Heads up, Zyssa - here comes the first test of our cover."

Rio pulled his cloak more tightly around himself, while Zyssa fumbled in her horse's saddlebag for the forged invitation that she and Rio had been provided with before they left Dunshelm.

"Halt!" the man at the gate commanded. "If you are here for the archery tournament then present either your invitation or the entrance fee."

Zyssa handed him the invite.

"I am Kal of Greenshades, champion archer of the village," Rio said, "and this is my second, Miss Elizabeth Fern. I am here to accept the invitation extended to my village to send our best archer to take part in the archery contest being held by a Mr Hubert Dracher."

The guard looked at Rio, then at Zyssa, then down at their invite, and then back at them before taking another long look at the invite.

"He's not going to go for this," Rio thought to himself, but then the guard nodded at them.

"Thank you, sir - your invitation is in order. If you and the young lady will kindly leave your horses here, a servant will see to them. You may proceed to the back garden of the estate, where you will be received."

Rio breathed a mental sigh of relief, and he noticed Zyssa visibly relax.

"Thank you, sir," he said as he dismounted. He then helped Zyssa to dismount, and the two started walking in the direction that the guard had indicated.

"I thought he wasn't going to go for it there for a moment," Zyssa said to Rio, once they were out of earshot.

"Me too, Zyssa, but so far so good - we're in!" he said to her, before adding in his own mind, "in the lion's den!"

He looked back and saw the big iron gate through which they had just come. There was a very regal coach now at the entrance. Rio saw the guard look at an invite and then quickly wave the coach through. It trundled into the grounds and up the path towards them.

"Stand to one side," he said, pulling Zyssa out of the way; the coach was not travelling fast, but it was best to give it a wide berth. He looked at it as it approached them. "Hmm, it seems Dracher's invited some Opposition royalty as well."

"How do you know that?" Zyssa asked.

Rio indicated the coach. "That's the crest of the royal family of Winteria - to be precise, the crest of the House of Shar - which means that's most likely the Crown Princess Deanery's Shar in there. She's Winteria's top archer, and..."

He stopped in mid-sentence and looked at something that had just caught his eye.

"What is it?" Zyssa asked him.

As the coach trundled past them, Zyssa caught a glimpse of a young lady sitting in the back along with two figures, their countenances obscured by hooded cloaks. Rio, however, was more interested in the coach's driver - there was something familiar about him.

"That's Dr-..." he started, then he stopped himself.

"What, Rio?" Zyssa asked, trying to restrain her rising frustration with her companion's muted responses.

Rio shook his head. "Nothing, Zyssa - I'm just being jumpy... first job back and everything... I'm seeing shadows where there aren't any."

Zyssa smiled. "Nice to know I'm not the only one with butterflies in my stomach," she said.

Rio returned the smile. He always considered nervousness to be a virtue. It sharpened the mind; heightened awareness of one's surroundings... provided it could be restrained when necessary, of course.

The two continued to walk. Up ahead, Rio could just see the coach turning in to the gardens.

"It has to be my imagination," he said to himself. "After all, what would Drago Lestrade be doing here, and with the Crown Princess at that?"

And yet he couldn't shake the fact that the driver bore an uncanny resemblance to him. He didn't like that thought; it led to several others. Rio clenched and unclenched his right hand as a particularly worrying one crossed his mind - surely *They* wouldn't dare to make an appearance, here of all places?

He looked at Zyssa out of the corner of his eye. Should he tell her his suspicions? After all, if he was right, it added a whole new dimension to what was already a dangerous business. He decided that there was no need to worry her unduly. It was going to be hard enough for her on her first mission to be this close to a major Opposition minion. Nothing would be gained by burdening her further with what most likely amounted to nothing more than a paranoid invention of his already jangled nerves. It was the importance of the assignment getting to him, nothing more.

And yet, as Rio looked again to catch a last fleeting glimpse of the coach and its driver as it disappeared around the corner, he couldn't shake the feeling that the situation they had been thrust into had taken an unexpected and potentially lethal turn for the worse.

REMEMBER HIM?

Series 6. Level 3.

CAPTAIN NEMANOR

This facsimile of Sinbad the Sailor was captain of the galleon Cloudwalker, which provided an occasional ferry service between levels two and three during series 6. Nemanor reminds me of Sinbad because of his outfit, which looked to be fairly Middle-Eastern, although his ship was undoubtedly made in the western style, and his accent was more Italian than Arabian. Perhaps this is not surprising, as the actor responsible for bringing Nemanor to life - Adrian Neil - spent most of his time on Nightmare playing Ridolfo, a self-confessed Venetian. Does Adrian Neil speak with a slightly dodgy Italian accent in real life? I can't help but wonder...

Anyway, perhaps Nemanor has more in common with the Flying Dutchman than with Sinbad, as he and his ship were apparently doomed to sail the Great Ocean forever: *"This ship is cursed never to find land, and I am cursed never to leave it."* - **Captain Nemanor**. The Great Ocean is perhaps one of the most intriguing locations ever to fall within Dungeon dimensions - Pickle mentioned that only elves ever crossed it, and never returned once they'd done so. Where on Earth did they all end up, then?

There were two things that Captain Nemanor could not abide - stowaways and Lord Fear. Nemanor's first appearance was within the waters of Lord Fear's Pool of Veracity, while dungeoneer Alan was travelling on the ship. Nemanor was obviously none too pleased to receive a call from Lord Fear, yet it appeared from their conversation that the pair of them had entered into some kind of agreement that involved Nemanor not allowing dungeoneers to travel on his ship. On this occasion, Nemanor seemed quite willing to kill Alan if he came across him, if only to get Lord Fear off his back. Alan managed to sneak off the ship unnoticed, of course.

Circumstances were slightly different for winning dungeoneer Ben. Arriving on board the Cloudwalker, Ben met Nemanor in person, and had to persuade him that he was not a stowaway. Once Ben had paid the fare for his journey (a bar of gold, of course) Nemanor stopped threatening to kill him, despite the terms of his treaty with Lord Fear. Nemanor and Ben went on to do each other a mutual service (Ben retrieved an astrolabe in return for a trip to the Caverns of Gore) and although Nemanor

continued to act in a fairly hostile manner, he was grateful to Ben for what he had done (although he jokingly made it seem as though he wasn't for a moment) and kept his own side of the bargain.

Further evidence of Nemanor's hatred of Lord Fear came to light in the final episode of the series, when the short-tempered mariner donated his Lightning Rod to the cause of sending Red Death crashing out of the sky. Dungeoneer Chris IV managed to win Nemanor over by mentioning his allegiance to Treguard - obviously that treaty with Lord Fear wasn't worth the paper it was written on!

With only three appearances, Captain Nemanor was never likely to become a classic character, but I quite like him. You could write a lot of back-story about him if you had the time and the inclination - there must be a lot to say about how he and the Cloudwalker ended up sailing the Great Ocean for all time. In terms of Nightmare, his role was very small, but then perhaps Nightmare was only a very small part of his own story, the incalculable parameters of which we could never hope to comprehend fully...

Fear Factor: 6 You wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of him.

Killer Instinct: 1 Ready and willing to slay stowaways.

Humour Rating: 2 Always deadly serious, except when teasing Ben.

Oscar Standard: 8 Adrian Neil did a good job of saving Nemanor from becoming a nautical nonentity.

KNIGHTMARE LOCATIONS

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Chichester, West Sussex

Location: Singleton, near Chichester, West Sussex.

AKA: Wolfenden, the Wolfglade and other village/forest locations.

Series featured in: 5 and 6.

These pictures were taken by me, Jake Collins, and scanned by Rosey Collins, in September 2008.

As promised in the last issue, here is the Gateway Inn, also known as Greenshades when encountered in level two:



Looking through the eye shield, leaving the tavern:



"There's some stairs to your right. Can you go up them?" Well, no, because they're not really there - they're here!



Next Issue: More from the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum.

WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG

Pre-school TV Shows of the 1980s II

By Gehn "Lex" Luthor

Pigeon Street (1981):

"If you lived in Pigeon Street, here are the people you could meet." I doubt there was a single youngster in the 1980s who did not recognise these, the opening lines to the theme music of Pigeon Street. Interestingly, during the opening titles, pigeons would fly around and the people would gradually arrive on the screen until every single regular character was present. Pigeon Street was a bustling road that consisted of regular houses, a block of flats known as Skyrise Court, various shops such as a pet shop and a launderette, and a park with a playground. Therefore, quite a crowd of people was present by the time the episode started.

One would assume from the title that pigeons played major rôles in the storylines. However, they were largely incidental, although they occasionally helped people, such as when the twins, Molly and Polly Glossop, were on the see-saw but could not make it work because they were equal in mass. At this juncture, a pigeon stood in the middle and leant backwards and forwards to make the see-saw tilt. Pigeons would also annoy people on occasions, most notably Rose, the old lady who lived next door to Daisy. Daisy would leave crumbs on her windowsill for the pigeons, but if Rose saw them, she would slam her window and scare them off. When her window was smashed by Gerald Glossop's football, a pigeon flew into her house, annoying Rose so much that she kept hold of Gerald's ball for the rest of the episode.

Another interesting feature of this programme was that some of the characters had a "theme music" that was often, but not always, played when they were featured. Memorable signature tunes were for Mr. Macadoo (the pet shop owner), Bob (who owned racing pigeons), Long-Distance Clara (a long-distance lorry driver who was married to Hugo the Chef), Reg (the park attendant) and my personal favourite, One Looking Up; One Looking Down, which was played for Mr. Jupiter and Mr. Baskerville.

Episodes would normally centre on specific characters, such as Rose and Daisy in *Noisy Neighbours* (another favourite of mine). Typically, there would be an element of conflict that would invariably be solved by the end

of the episode (Rose and Daisy in *Noisy Neighbours*; Gerald and Rose in *Can I Have My Ball Back, Please?*). Occasionally, the focus was on the Pigeon Street community as a whole against an outside threat, such as when Mr. Clark from the council wanted to remove the playground and replace it with a car park. The residents of Pigeon Street set up a fair to raise enough money to enable the car park to be built underground.

No prizes for guessing how many episodes were made - yes, thirteen again. Ask any 1980s youngster about children's programmes and many will mention Pigeon Street, which leads me to think that it was repeated more frequently than some of the other programmes, or that it was so memorable that everyone remembers it. Either way, it was a great show that should still be repeated.

Educational Value = 3/5.

Entertainment Value = 5/5.

Mr. Benn (1971-1972):

Yes, believe it or not, this programme was already more than ten years old by the time we were introduced to it. The opening titles featured a disc that was divided into eight sectors. At the start of the titles, Mr. Benn would be visible in his usual black suit, but as the music played, the disc would rotate to show Mr. Benn in seven different costumes (such as a spacesuit and a clown's outfit) until it had gone full circle. From this, one could be forgiven for thinking that only eight episodes were made, but of course, this is a *See-Saw* programme, so thirteen were manufactured.

Every episode would begin at Mr. Benn's house - 52, Festive Road. Mr. Benn would leave his house and walk to the nearby costume shop (although he found the shop by chance in the first episode), passing children playing games as he walked. On arrival at the shop, the shopkeeper would welcome him in and show him what costumes he was carrying. Mr. Benn would subsequently choose one and head for the fitting room to try it on. Up until this point, the format of every episode was identical (apart from what costume he chose) but once he had changed into the costume, the rest of the plot would centre around an adventure that was themed to the outfit he had chosen.

Having changed, Mr. Benn would notice a second door in the back of the fitting room. On passing through it, he would find himself in another world that directly related to the costume he was wearing. For example,

when he had chosen the spacesuit, the door led to a rocket. The stories themselves would either involve an element of conflict that Mr. Benn would need to sort out, or a task in which his assistance would be required. An example of this is when he chose the clown's outfit and needed to help circus-folk build a bridge to the next town.

When the task had been accomplished or the conflict had been resolved, the shopkeeper would appear "as if by magic". He would invite Mr. Benn to walk through a door (the entrance to the rocket, for example), but the door would lead back to the fitting room. After leaving the shop, Mr. Benn would walk home, again passing the children, who were now playing games that related to his adventure. Once home, he would find a small memento of his adventure, such as a wooden spoon or a box of matches, and the episode would end.

This is another show that everyone seems to remember, suggesting it was repeated frequently. While researching this programme, I learnt that a fourteenth episode has since been made (*The Gladiator* in 2005). I have not seen it, but I sincerely hope that it remains true to the original and does not repeat the unnecessary overhaul that happened in *Postman Pat*.

Educational Value = 4/5.

Entertainment Value = 5/5.

Animal Fair (1986 & 1988):

The See-Saw slot was fifteen minutes in length, but this did not necessarily suggest that only one programme was shown. Every now and then, there would be two programmes; firstly, a five-minute programme such as *Spot the Dog* or *King Rollo*, followed by a ten-minute show such as *Bric-A-Brac* or *Animal Fair*.

Presented by Don Spencer (of *Play School* and *Hokey Cokey* fame), each episode of *Animal Fair* would feature a specific group of animals. For example, the *Builders and Diggers* episode would feature such animals as beavers, and there would be footage of how they construct dams. The majority of each episode would feature such footage with Don Spencer narrating over it, similar to how proper wildlife programmes are made. However, there would also be music in the form of two or three songs sung by Spencer. Then, at the end, there would be a game, which would, for instance, involve the viewer having to guess the identity of an animal from various clues. The game that I remember most vividly is from the hedgehog episode, in which a maze was shown and the hedgehog needed

to get to the middle to find its food.

Indeed, that brings me to an interesting point about Animal Fair. The animal in the maze mentioned above was not actually a hedgehog at all. In fact, it was an echidna, which is an Australian animal that resembles a hedgehog in appearance and is often known as the "spiny anteater". Australian animals would often feature on Animal Fair, probably because of Don Spencer's Australian nationality. Furthermore, some of the songs would centre on these animals - this was the programme that taught me, by means of a song, that koalas were not bears and were actually more closely related to kangaroos. Other Australian creatures featured included the wombat and the duck-billed platypus, again bringing me to ask how many children today have even heard of these animals, never mind know where they come from.

Eight episodes of Animal Fair were broadcast in 1986, together with five in 1988, bringing us once again to the magic thirteen. As far as See-Saw programmes go, this was not a classic, as can be seen by the absence of information about it anywhere on the Internet. However, what it lacked in entertainment it made up for in education, even though it could be argued that it would be more suited to Watch With Teacher than Watch With Mother.

Educational Value = 5/5.

Entertainment Value = 1/5.

Fireman Sam (1986-1988):

Although most of us would not have seen Fireman Sam until 1987, those in Wales would have been able to watch a few episodes in 1986 on S4C. This makes perfect sense, seeing as the setting is the fictional Welsh village of Pontypandy. Where in Wales Pontypandy is supposed to be is never actually mentioned, but Newtown is often mentioned as being local, suggesting to me that the programme is set somewhere in Powys. Fireman Sam was an animated show, similar in style to Postman Pat. Indeed, the programmes were similar in more ways than simply the way they were animated, as they both revolved around a public service, encouraging youngsters to become more familiar with the post and fire services.

Of course, since fires were central to many of the plots in Fireman Sam, fire safety was often spelt out by one of the characters. Examples of this are when Sam was doing a fire drill with his nephew and niece, James and Sarah. When they had evacuated the building, Sarah tried to go back

in to get her teddy, causing Sam to point out how dangerous it would be to do that in a real fire situation. Similarly, when a firework goes out during a display, one of the firemen goes to relight it, at which point the station officer clearly explains why one should never go back to a firework.

As we know, the fire service does more than simply extinguish fires, and this is brought out in Fireman Sam, as he and his crew often solve such situations as people being trapped in windows and cats being stuck in trees. Alongside Sam in the fire station are Station Officer Steele, an Englishman in charge of the fire station, but who is sometimes shown up by Sam, and Elvis Cridlington, who tends to make mistakes, resulting in correction from Sam and Steele.

In a couple of episodes, Trevor Evans the bus driver appears as a fireman since, according to Steele, he is doing a part-time fireman's course. Most of the time, however, he is seen driving the white bus and sometimes being the cause of the situation that Sam needs to solve. For instance, when the bus gets a flat tyre, Sam rolls the spare wheel to Trevor, but Trevor fails to catch it, so the rest of the episode is spent trying to catch up with the wheel, which in the meanwhile runs amok in Pontypandy. Other characters include Bella Lasagne, who runs a café and has a cat called Rosa, Dilys Price, who runs the main store in Pontypandy and who has a crush on Trevor, and Dilys's son Norman, whose mischief often leads people, including himself, into trouble.

I feel that Fireman Sam successfully manages to balance entertaining stories with the important message about fire safety. Even when a safety message is being clearly conveyed, it never feels as though the show is preaching, as the message is always needed to progress the plot. And how many episodes were made? Thirty-two. Yes, thirty-two, not thirteen.

Educational Value = 5/5.

Entertainment Value = 4/5.

Pie in the Sky (1986):

As with many of the See-Saw programmes we have looked at so far, thirteen episodes of Pie in the Sky were made, but for whatever reason, this particular show appears to have slipped through many people's memories. Worse still, some of what little information exists online is completely incorrect - I have seen sites that suggest that the Pie Man was played by Iain Lauchlan (Fingermouse) and that his wife was Carol

Leader (Chock-A-Block). In actual fact, David Hargreaves was the Pie Man, Chloe Ashcroft was his wife (the Pie Wife) and Ben Thomas played the rôle of the Pie Pilot, who was from Outer Space and who would contact the Pie Man by means of a special rolling pin.

I believe that this rolling pin was given to the Pie Man by the Pie Pilot at the end of the first episode, so that there could be communication between them whenever it was needed. Anyway, episodes tended to start at the Pie Man's bakery. While he and his wife were working, the rolling pin would flash and the Pie Pilot's voice could be heard: "Pie Ship to Pie Man, Pie Ship to Pie Man." Exactly how an episode would progress from this point is, alas, a little foggy in my mind (I have not seen the show for twenty years), so I apologise in advance if any of the following information is erroneous.

The Pie Man would be called upon by the Pie Pilot to put a song into a pie, but the Pie Man was not always best pleased to have his work interrupted. After a conversation with the Pie Pilot, the Pie Man would put on his bicycle clips and cycle out to get the ingredients. In the meantime, the song that would later be filling the pie was sung and acted by Chloe Ashcroft and Ben Thomas. For instance, one episode featured the song *Soldier, Soldier, won't you marry me?* While the song was performed, Thomas would keep sending Ashcroft off to fetch stuff for him, and her facial expression would become more and more frustrated as the tune progressed.

Once the song had finished and the Pie Man had come back, the pie was baked and the song was put into it. If I remember correctly, this was accomplished by the film of the song being played at high speed and simultaneously funnelled into the pie. The Pie Pilot then beamed the pie up to his ship (hence "Pie in the Sky") and the episode would end there.

If you were to ask an '80s youngster to name three See-Saw programmes, it is unlikely that many would mention Pie in the Sky. However, although not a classic, it was nonetheless entertaining and certainly worthy of more analysis and appreciation than it currently appears to be getting.

Educational Value = 1/5.

Entertainment Value = 4/5.

KIDS' TV SHOWS I GREW UP WITH

Focus on: He-Man and the Masters of the Universe/She-Ra Princess of Power.

Original Broadcast Run: September 1983 - December 1987.

UK TV Channel: ITV1.

On the planet Eternia, a never-ending battle between good and evil is being played out. The ancient and mysterious Castle Grayskull holds the secrets and the power to control the universe, and the evil Skeletor will stop at nothing to procure them. The Sorceress of Grayskull enlists the aid of Eternia's young prince, Adam, in the eternal battle against the forces of evil. By holding aloft the Sword of Grayskull (or the Sword of Power, as most people prefer to call it) Prince Adam transforms into He-Man, the most powerful man in the universe, while his cowardly pet tiger, Cringer, becomes the brave and mighty Battle Cat.

That's the premise of the show in a nutshell. As you can imagine, over two seasons of sixty-five episodes each (that's one hundred and thirty episodes in all, as you may have already realised) there turned out to be quite a bit more to it. The cartoon version of He-Man was originally made with the sole purpose of selling Mattel's Masters of the Universe toylines. Filmation (a company notorious for its copious use of stock animation sequences, often several times in the same episode or even the same scene) took the characters from Mattel's mini-comics, which were sold with the figures, and adapted them as they saw fit. He-Man and Battle Cat, for example, were originally characters in their own right. The whole premise of Prince Adam, Cringer and "By the Power of Grayskull" was made up specifically for the cartoon.

All the main characters (and there were an awful lot of them) were voiced by only four different actors - John Erwin, Alan Oppenheimer, Linda Gary and Lou Scheimer. (Credited for his voice work as Erik Gunden, Lou Scheimer was the head honcho at Filmation, and was also the executive producer of the show.) In addition to Prince Adam/He-Man (Erwin), Cringer/Battle Cat (Oppenheimer) and the Sorceress (Gary), the main "goodies" of the show were: Man-at-Arms (Oppenheimer), supreme scientist and general father figure; Teela (Gary), Captain of the Royal Guard, Adam's childhood friend, biological daughter of the Sorceress and adopted daughter of Man-at-Arms; Orko (Scheimer), a small, floating wizard from another dimension, whose magic was a bit unreliable on

Eternia and who acted as the court magician; King Randor (Scheimer) and Queen Marlena (Gary), Adam's parents and the just and noble rulers of Eternia; Ram-Man (Erwin), a slow-witted chap who liked to bash things with his head; and Stratos (Scheimer), the King of the Birdmen. As the show progressed, many other characters were introduced, but that was the original line-up.

On the Dark Side of Eternia, Skeletor (Oppenheimer) had surrounded himself with a fascinating array of baddies at his base of evil, Snake Mountain. (Interestingly enough, according to the topline and a few very early episodes, Skeletor and his followers were the original "Masters of the Universe" that the title refers to, although this term is more often used to refer to the goodies, particularly in the 2002 remake of the cartoon.) Skeletor's allies included: Evil-Lyn (Gary), a ruthless witch with no sense of loyalty; Trap-Jaw (Scheimer), a cyborg pirate with a bionic arm who liked to eat metal; Beast-Man (Erwin), who had the ability to communicate with and control most of the animal life on Eternia; Mer-Man (Oppenheimer), warlord of the oceans; and Tri-Klops (Scheimer), the man with three eyes. Again, more villains were introduced over time with a view to selling more action figures, notably the famous double-act of Kobra Kahn (Scheimer) and Webstor (Erwin), as well as the two-headed dullard Two Bad (Scheimer).

There were many, many guest stars too, many of whom were equally as determined as Skeletor to take over Grayskull, or to do something just as evil. To help the four stalwart voice actors, some of these guest characters were voiced by Erica Scheimer, Lou's daughter, who specialised in young boys (such as Prince Adam's cousin Jeremy) and occasionally did female characters too, giving Linda Gary a well-earned break. Another occasional guest star was George DiCenzio, who is perhaps best known to some (he certainly is to me) as Lorraine's father from *Back to the Future*.

He-Man worked so well because it was basically a character-driven show. Because it concentrated on only a few characters at a time, it was always very effectively done. All the main characters had bags of back-story and complex emotions and motivations - don't worry, though, I won't go into them all now! I will mention one example, though - Teela had no idea that she was the daughter of the Sorceress, and she had a very complicated relationship with Adam, whom she had grown up with and was now supposed to protect and train, while at the same time she fancied

the pants off He-Man (they all wore furry pants, as I'm sure you remember) and very much looked up to him. Teela didn't know, of course, that Adam and He-Man were the same person, and that He-Man's personality was more reflective of Adam's true nature. Again, I could go on about that for ages, but I won't.

Such was the strong characterisation, some episodes were carried off quite brilliantly without much of a plot and no villains in them whatsoever. An episode I always remembered (entitled Not So Blind) involves He-Man and Ram-Man taking a blind child on a little excursion and becoming temporarily blind themselves - accidentally, of course. Thanks to their experiences, the two heroes - and all of us at home - learned a valuable lesson about how being disabled isn't the same thing as being helpless, and that everyone is intelligent and useful in their own way. Yes, the show is not perfect - it's trite, it's clichéd, it's in-your-face, but it's done incredibly well and it really is a brilliant piece of television.

My favourite character is and always has been Skeletor, who always provided a lot of laughs, but was genuinely scary too. As I have said before, this is something that Lord Fear achieved quite well on Nightmare, but I always feel that Skeletor was a far more menacing villain. If he ever had managed to get hold of the secrets of Grayskull, he would have been ruling the universe in the most tyrannical manner in no time - he was an incredibly powerful fiend with a ruthlessly evil nature. However, he could also be used to great comedy effect, although this never detracted from the underlying menace of his character, which I think is a great achievement that is owed principally to the considerable talents of Alan Oppenheimer.

Another of my favourite characters is Orko, who provided a lot of comedy moments and was the main point of comic relief for the writers. As I mentioned, his magic was prone to go wrong on Eternia, which led to lots of funny moments and a good deal of trouble. Orko's home planet was called Trolla. Here he had been known as Orko the Great, a powerful and highly respected sorcerer, which is why he found living on Eternia a bit of a culture shock at first. Trolla and Trollan characters featured in many episodes, which always provided a nice bit of history for Orko. The main Trollan characters were Orko's favourite uncle, Montork (Lou Scheimer), who had apparently taught him all the magic he knew, and Dre-Elle (Gary), Orko's disturbingly alluring girlfriend/fiancée/general squeeze.

My favourite Orko moments involve him using his magic to great effect - even on Eternia, it could still be very powerful and effective if he found himself or his friends in a really tight spot. Unfortunately, Orko's role as the clown and comic relief was somewhat overused, I feel, and he was infantilised far too much, in my view. Because the kids at home were supposed to be able to relate to Orko, he was often being told to clean his room or to own up to being a naughty little Trollan for whatever reason, yet all the available evidence points to the fact that Orko was, in fact, an adult! We know for a fact that he had been on Eternia for almost ten years, and before that he had built up this great reputation on Trolla as the planet's most powerful wizard. This is a glaring inconsistency, it has to be said, but despite this, my fondness for Orko has never waned.

After two seasons of He-Man, Filmation and Mattel put their heads together once again with a view to making more cartoons and selling more action figures. The original Masters of the Universe topline had featured a group of baddies called the Evil Horde, who had never quite made it into the He-Man cartoon, and Mattel was keen to launch another set of action figures aimed at girls - ones with colourful hair and little hairbrushes to brush it with, very much like My Little Pony. Thus She-Ra, Princess of Power, was born. The planet Etheria was in the vicelike grip of the Evil Horde. After a failed attempt to take over Eternia, Hordak, leader of the ruthless conquerors, had kidnapped Prince Adam's twin sister, and raised her as a Horde warrior. Naturally, it was up to Prince Adam to release Adora from the Horde's influence (mainly thanks to the second Sword of Grayskull, the Sword of Protection) and help her to realise her true destiny - transforming into She-Ra and fighting against the Horde's evil.

Once her brother had guided her back onto the right path, Adora took up the position as leader of the Great Rebellion, who fought against the tyranny of the Horde from the safety of the magical Whispering Woods. Meanwhile, in the Fright Zone, Hordak and his minions forever tried to crush the Rebellion and to increase their stranglehold over Etheria, neither of which was really possible with She-Ra around. The four original He-Man actors all provided voices for She-Ra, although John Erwin and Alan Oppenheimer only appeared when their He-Man characters were in the episode, which happened quite a lot. Lou Scheimer and Linda Gary both had several regular She-Ra roles, as did Erica Scheimer and George DiCenzio, guest stars no longer. Melendy Britt joined the cast as Adora and She-Ra, becoming the only main voice actor not to provide voices for

both shows.

In addition to Adora/She-Ra, the main rebels (goodies) were: Bow (DiCenzio), archer, musician, conjurer and storyteller extraordinaire; Madame Razz (Gary), a ditzy old witch whose magic was apt to go a bit wrong, rather like Orko's; Kowl (Lou Scheimer), a rainbow-winged bird who looked a bit like a koala and a bit like an owl, and who took on the role of the small airborne joke character, rather like Orko; Broom (Lou Scheimer), Madame Razz's talking broomstick; Glimmer (Gary), Princess of Bright Moon, the only part of Etheria that was free from Horde rule; Queen Angella (Erica Scheimer), Glimmer's mother; and the Twiggets, small purple-skinned creatures who lived the Whispering Woods, and whose main representatives were Spragg (Lou Scheimer), Sprocker (Lou Scheimer) and Spritina (Erica Scheimer). And how could I forget Spirit, Adora's horse, who transformed into the flying unicorn Swift Wind? Originally Spirit could not talk, but he gained the power of speech after turning into Swift Wind, and retained it even in his horse form. His voice was provided by Lou Scheimer.

Meanwhile, in the Fright Zone, Hordak (DiCenzio) was in charge of things, although he occasionally had to report to Horde Prime (Lou Scheimer), the overall ruler of the Horde empire. After Horde Prime and Hordak, the chain of command went from Shadow Weaver (Gary), the Evil-Lyn of She-Ra, through Force Captain Catra (Britt), who had a magic mask that turned her into a large purple cat, to the other Horde creatures from the original toyline: Mantenna (Lou Scheimer) could fire many different types of laser beam from his pop-out eyes; Grizzlor (Lou Scheimer) was a savage bear-like creature, a bit like Beast-Man; Scorpia (Gary) was a scorpion-lady kinda thing; and Leech (Lou Scheimer) had the power to drain the energy from his enemies. Underneath these senior Horde members was a smattering of human soldiers, and a very large army of robot troopers. Another notable baddie was Hordak's obnoxious little spy Imp (Erica Scheimer), who could transform into any inanimate object, and picked up a lot of useful information about the Rebellion whilst doing so.

She-Ra was never as good as He-Man, but it's still a pretty good show, for very much the same reasons as its parent. I've never particularly liked She-Ra as a main character, and I feel that her ability to transform her sword into pretty much anything is a bit too much of a fix-all - He-Man's sword, of course, never did this. I can just about stomach "sword to rope" or sword to shield", but when she starts declaring "sword to net",

"sword to blanket", "sword to ladder" and even "sword to ice-maker", I start wrinkling my brow. My favourite episodes of She-Ra are certainly the ones with He-Man characters in them (of which there are many) but I also enjoy some of the Etheria-only episodes for their own merits, particularly one entitled Book Burning, where the Horde takes over a village and Leech tells the schoolteacher that she is only to use "official Horde books" from now on. Having worked in a primary school for seven years and completed one year of a three-year BEd course, I find this to be a biting accurate piece of satire.

She-Ra and He-Man always did their best work, of course, when they joined forces, and I'm sure the moral significance of this was not lost on the young viewers. Just in case it was, however, a little rainbow-coloured troll called Loo-Kee (Erica Scheimer) would pop up at the end of each episode to remind us of what we'd learned. This used to happen at the end of He-Man episodes too, of course, but at least then it was a different character hammering home the moral each time. After watching a few episodes of She-Ra, you might find that Loo-Kee's continual high-pitched moralising becomes slightly grating.

Like He-Man, She-Ra ran for two seasons. The first contained sixty-five episodes, while the second had only twenty-eight. Shortly after She-Ra ended, the live-action movie version of Masters of Universe was released, but unfortunately the whole He-Man craze was way past its peak of popularity by this stage, and the film was a bit of a flop. However, I don't mind going out on a limb and saying that I think the movie is quite good. Undoubtedly it deviates from the atmosphere and canon of the cartoon a bit too much, but I find it very easy to enjoy as a somewhat camp romp with plenty of action and excitement, and even some nice character moments. Dolph Lundgren as He-Man may not be the best piece of casting ever, but Frank Langella as Skeletor is absolutely brilliant! Never will you see a more evil, ruthless interpretation of the character, which nonetheless fits in with the way he was presented in the cartoon.

As I have stated in TES before, He-Man was my absolute favourite thing in the world before I discovered Nightmare, and I still enjoy it a lot today. Yes, it's a very obvious attempt to entice us to buy action figures and play-sets, but it's also an engaging show with plenty of depth that Lou Scheimer and his friends at Filmation obviously put a lot of time, effort and love into. For me, it doesn't have the same resonance as The Mysterious Cities of Gold, or the genuine, unadulterated thrill and

excitement of Knightmare, but it's a quality show and I still really like it after all these years. I still get that little thrill when I hear "By the Power of Grayskull!" booming out of the TV and I hope I always will, because He-Man was a big part of my childhood, and the childhoods of so many children of the '80s, and I think it deserves a lot of respect for that.

KIDS' TV SHOWS OTHER PEOPLE ARE GROWING UP WITH

By Rosey Collins

MODERN KIDS' TV, AND WHY IT'S NOT ALL BAD:

Some of my favourite articles in The Eye Shield are those in which readers look back, and remember with fondness the children's television of their youth. There is, after all, nothing like a bit of nostalgia. Many have, in the same breath, lamented the decline of children's television in recent years; they say that it has been dumbed down, or there is too much of it, or it is simply not as good as it was ten or twenty years ago. I do not disagree; as a general rule, I think that children's television *has* gone downhill. But is it really as bad as all that? The answer, in my opinion, is not always. I have watched a bit of CBBC over the past year or so, and I have seen a few things well worth watching. We all know about *Raven*, if only from reading a little bit about it here in The Eye Shield, so there is no need for me to tell you about that. I happen to think it's been going downhill anyway - unlike the three (admittedly much newer) CBBC shows I shall now tell you about.

Trapped (2007-2009):

I'll admit it now: this show does suffer from dumbing down, to a degree. Recently, in the current (second) series, the chances of there being a fart joke in any one episode have risen to at least fifty percent. But in spite of this, it is a good show. *Trapped* is a gameshow that (without the fart jokes) would not have been out of place on children's television ten or fifteen years ago. New ideas and formats are not necessarily a bad thing, of course, but it is good to see more traditional shows like this running alongside them.

Six children are trapped in a weird, gothic tower with six floors. On each of the top four floors, the contestants have to complete a challenge. They're working as a team, so what's the point? I'll tell you. In each challenge, there is a saboteur. If the saboteur makes the team fail the challenge, they then all have to vote for who they thought the saboteur was, and whoever they vote for is trapped on that floor. If they pass the challenge, they still have to vote - because of time, but also because it's interesting to see whether the person was spotted - but the saboteur is automatically trapped. The game begins at the top of the tower, and by the time they reach floor two, there are only two contestants left. They

then have to answer questions in turn about their time in the tower - who got trapped on floor X, what colour were the plant pots and such - and whoever wins, goes free.

The game is not entirely fair, as some challenges are easier to sabotage than others, and in any challenge the saboteur has the greatest chance of being trapped. But so what? Gameshows are usually unfair in some way, and the point of this game is that it's fun. The challenges usually conform to one of three formats: the team has to accomplish a task in a certain amount of time; things have to be in a certain position at the end of the time (which is different, in that the task can be completed several times, with the saboteur constantly messing it up); or the team has to pass the challenge by making three correct choices, but fail if they make three bad ones. This is a poor explanation - it will be clearer if I use examples, which I shall do, using a few of my favourite challenges.

In "Feed Me Lies", of the first series, a talking flower called Phyllis asked the team true or false questions, which she read from tiny seeds. Phyllis liked to eat seeds that contained true statements, and her companion Madge liked lies. To pass the challenge, the team had to feed three seeds to the correct plant. In "Freaky Factory", of series one and two, the team have to stand in booths by a conveyer belt and try to fill five egg boxes with eggs of the same colour (the eggs and boxes are purple and green, and either white or black). As soon as they have filled five, they pass the challenge, whereas in "Camp Fear" - a series two challenge - the campfire must be built at the end of an allotted time. The team will build it several times, and then hide in their tents while the saboteur comes out and destroys the fire. If the fire is not built at the end of a minute, they lose. This format is not particularly interesting, as there isn't much for the saboteur to do except come out and destroy everything. There are several different versions of it, but it's all basically the same game. But I do like "Camp Fear", because the team are alerted to the destruction of the fire (which, by the way, is not a *real* fire) by the appearance of the Moon Howler - a guy in a funny costume who comes on and howls, and freaks out the team while they are building the fire.

Another favourite challenge of mine is "Extraction", which involves doing dentistry on a werewolf, but I shan't go into it. Instead I shall now tell you about the characters. The contestants are guided through the show by The Voice - a faceless woman with a white-powdered face and purple

lipstick, which is all the audience can see of her. She tells the team what's going on, and guides the saboteur through his or her attempts to fail the challenge. She addresses only the contestants, via their "whisper clips", while her co-host, the Caretaker - a man with a northern accent and heavy monster-like makeup, who lives in the roof of the tower - keeps the audience informed of what is going on. This is not ideal, as I prefer gameshow hosts to interact with the contestants (which they always did in the olden days - it's a funny thing that *Raven: The Island* started!). The contestants do at least have The Voice, but the problem is that she talks *at* them, not to them; she has to, because it is obvious that at least some of the time her lines are dubbed on later! Editing mistakes have meant that she has called a contestant by the wrong name, or changed her mind about which of the werewolf's teeth the saboteur wants to pull in "Extraction", and the contestants - clearly hearing something different - don't bat an eye.

Some of the challenges have characters with them, such as Phyllis and Madge (sometimes called Marge - they don't seem quite sure) and the Moon Howler, among others. Also, there is one other regular character: Wiley Sneak, played by Olly Pike, a reasonably attractive young man who I imagine dreams of heartthrob status and a part in something like *Hollyoaks*. But perhaps I'm wrong. Perhaps he is happy playing Wiley Sneak, and he is very good at it. While the Caretaker explains the challenges, Wiley Sneak demonstrates them to us, the viewers at home. In the second series, they took to making several copies of him in the demonstration, but for me it is far preferable when he does the challenge - *and* sabotages it - on his own. He never has any lines, but conveys his feelings beautifully with his face and body. Sometimes he laughs wickedly as he sabotages the challenge, or smiles with pride and enthusiasm as he makes progress with it. But best of all is when he is unnerved by one of the scary characters. Hilarious!

So that's *Trapped* - a show with some problems, but overall, very good.

Election (2008):

This was a reality show of sorts, presented by Angellica Bell, in which children aged eleven to fourteen competed for the honour of being named Britain's best young politician. It was a good idea, and very well done. The first episode saw hopefuls participating in a selection day at some kind of adventure playground, helping each other through arduous tasks under the watchful eye of "series judge" Jonathan Dimbleby, who was

looking for leadership qualities.

The introductory episode was rather disappointing, as it had very little to do with politics and was not what I tuned in for. However, it was interesting to see who stuck out, and to try and guess who might progress furthest in the competition. Fourteen-year-old Hazel was particularly memorable here, with her tendency to push herself forward and take everybody in hand. At the end of the episode, the chosen candidates were surprised with the good news in the middle of doing some everyday activity, when there happened to be a BBC camera in their school, house or garden. They then travelled to London, and moved into the Election House, where they would live for as long as they were in the competition.

From episode two, a clear format was established. The candidates would be split into two teams, more or less evenly, although in every other episode there was an odd number of competitors. Angellica would name the leader of each team, and then a celebrity guest would come along and explain what they had to do. First of all, the two teams would compete in a "test of skills", which would prepare them for their "leadership challenge". For the first few weeks, the team that won the test of skills would have an advantage in the leadership challenge, such as an extra hour in which to prepare. After a while, though, they dispensed with this and the test of skills became nothing more than a warm-up exercise.

The leadership challenge would usually involve some kind of political issue; the teams had to raise awareness of things such as excess plastic bag use, dog poo and chewing gum spoiling our streets, the importance of fair trade chocolate and the plight of endangered species. After each team had performed, a panel of experts - different each week - would vote for the winning team. That team was then rewarded with a fun day out to one of London's attractions, while the losers had to face Jonathan Dimbleby in an earnest looking boardroom. They would sit at one side of a table, and he at the other. After quizzing them about their performances, and pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of what they had done, he would say to one candidate, "Your campaign's over." This person would then talk to Angellica about his or her time on the show, before being driven away in a taxi while the remaining candidates waved from the balcony of the Election House, and Jonathan Dimbleby explained his decision to the audience.

As a general rule, it was the younger candidates that went out earliest. The first to leave - though not necessarily in this order - were Ben, Bethan, Reem and Hannah. I remember very little of what they did, as they went out so early, but the final six all made a lasting impression on me. They were Amardeep, a capable boy, but a little too cocky; Tudor, a likeable young lad whom Angellica seemed quite taken with; Jac, a camp and charismatic young dancer who lives near me, in St Albans; Izzie, who kept getting through by keeping her head down while others made mistakes; Hazel, a strong and confident candidate throughout; and Quincy, who was charming, cool and capable. Amardeep's exit was made memorable by his altercation with Jonathan Dimbleby, when he questioned his decision. That week he, Izzie and Tudor had lost a debate (against Hazel, Jac and Quincy) on a special edition of *News Night*, arguing in favour of the use of the Mosquito in shops. Tudor fed the arguments into their earpieces, and did all he could, while Amardeep made a complete mess of the debate and Izzie sat in silence.

The following week, my two favourite candidates - Hazel and Tudor - were put in a team together, and with a team of three to compete against, they unfortunately lost their leadership challenge. Tudor went out gracefully, shaking the hand of Jonathan Dimbleby and giving his heartfelt thanks for the great times on the show, and everything he had learnt. In the quarter-final, it was boys versus girls, as it had been in the first two weeks. Again, Izzie snuck through by being on a team with Hazel, while Jac and Quincy made a hash of their komodo dragon endangerment awareness campaign. It was a very memorable moment when they persuaded several members of the general public to form "a giant human conga line" (I don't know what else you might make a conga line out of!), then left them alone for ten or fifteen minutes, and came back to find them all gone. Jac was then eliminated. Jonathan Dimbleby described him as "someone you would always want to have on your team", but acknowledged Quincy's superior leadership skills.

So Izzie was in the semi-final, but was eliminated when it came to a choice between her and Hazel, after Quincy beat both of them in the individual leadership challenge. He and Hazel then each had to deliver a campaign speech to children from all over the country in the House of Commons, as their final challenge, and here was where the system came unstuck. Until this point, it had been a very fair contest, but in the end Hazel did not win in spite of clearly delivering a more polished and articulate speech. This time, the children were the ones to vote, and

they of course chose the less nerdy and more charismatic Quincy. He was an excellent candidate, and a worthy winner, but I do feel that Hazel did slightly better.

Quincy's prize was to sit at one end of a huge conference table and have a cringingly embarrassing conversation with Gordon Brown. The prime minister clearly had no idea what he was doing, or why. He blustered into the room, took Quincy's hand and said awkwardly, "I hear you like basketball and music." He then proceeded to ask a lot of questions about what Quincy had done to win a meeting with him, showing that he had no knowledge at all of the programme. Quincy answered his questions patiently and articulately, and then rounded off the series with an emotional speech about what an honour it was to have won *Election*, and to have met the prime minister.

This show had a great many merits to it. Sometimes the contestants could have done with more preparation time - they weren't always that clear on facts - and as I said, there was a slight problem with the way the final result was decided. But I consider these small issues the only flaws. It would be so easy to make a show about politics, and relevant contemporary issues, and make it terrible. This is not what happened with *Election*. The presentation was straightforward, honest and intelligent. The political issues raised did not need to be in any way dressed up or made to seem "cool", as they were made interesting simply by being placed in the hands of bright and enthusiastic young people. The first series of *Election* gave us laughs, education, and a cast of characters who showed us how delightful and intelligent young people today can be. Bring on series two, I say!

Ed and Oucho's Excellent Inventions (2009):

In my opinion, presenter Ed Petrie (custodian of the CBBC Channel since September 2007) is the best thing that has happened to CBBC for a long time. With his quick wit and genuine manner, his obvious enjoyment of his work and his amusing dynamic with cactus puppet Oucho, Ed truly is a breath of fresh air beside the patronising, think-they're-cool-but-aren't children's TV presenters we see so much of these days. It is, therefore, just and right that Ed and Oucho have got their own show.

Ed and Oucho's Excellent Inventions is conclusive proof that the presenter can, and does, make or break a show. You can have a wonderful format and a bad presenter, and the show will be no good at all. In this

case, we have a really weird format that almost no one could present successfully. Enter Ed and Ouchol! The show is an odd hotchpotch of ideas, containing elements of *Sooty*, *How 2* and gunge-infested gameshows such as *Get Your Own Back*.

The premise is this: Ed and Ouchol drive around the country in their van, and build weird and wonderful devices that have been designed by CBBC viewers. The show always begins inside the van, where after a bit of banter with Ouchol, Ed looks through a W. H. Smith folder - in which he allegedly keeps all of the designs that have been sent in - and considers one or two implausible ideas before finally picking a doable invention. They then drive to the home of the inventor, and attempt to surprise him or her by knocking on the door, but somehow the surprise always gets spoilt in a most amusing way. Then, when he has met the CBBC viewer, Ed puts "the Brainstormer" on his or her head, and the child explains the idea of the invention to the accompaniment of a little animation representing his or her thoughts.

With a basic idea of what they are after, Ed goes to the van and consults *The Big Boy's Book of Science*, which happens to be pink, much to Ouchol's amusement. In the book, Ed finds some kind of science that can be used in the invention; gears was one, and solar power another. At this point, he will usually feel daunted by the difficulty of the task, and imagine what would have happened if they had picked one of the impossible ideas from earlier - cue another animated fantasy sequence, featuring Ouchol getting into some kind of scrape with the invention. This is a bit silly and pointless, but undoubtedly it is enjoyable for the viewer who came up with that invention, for whom the BBC have gone to the trouble of making the animation.

After this, Ed and Ouchol make an attempt to build the invention, and then get the child to come and have a look at it. The child then participates in a fairly complicated scene, exchanging scripted lines with Ed and Ouchol. As you would expect, some children are better at this than others, but they all do fine thanks to Ed's wonderful support. He has a genuine rapport with these young people, and clearly enjoys acting out these tongue-in-cheek scenes where he tries to show off his wonderful work, before finally having to admit that he has failed and must start all over again.

Back at the drawing board, Ed considers how he can make the invention

better, at which point Oucho always claims to have been there when something relevant to the topic was invented; greenhouses was one, and cuckoo clocks another. There follows a fantasy sequence, featuring Ed as a historical character - the inventor of whatever the thing is - and Oucho giving him the idea. Ed's amusing characters are always a delight to watch, and even though it is made clear that Oucho is not being entirely honest about his involvement in these incidents, we are told true historical facts about how groundbreaking inventions came into being.

Ed realises that Oucho's story could be relevant to what he is trying to do, and so calls someone who can explain the science to him - a character who is, in fact, Ed himself in a costume. Hapless explorer Scott Stuck, for example, told him all about solar power, while a pastry-obsessed soldier called Major Cake explained about gears. Hilarious! Ed and Oucho then meet up with the child, and set up a test to see what will work best for their invention. Here we see the gungey gameshow aspect, as either Ed or the child - or both - will get covered in something in the process of proving that copper conducts electricity and spaghetti doesn't (Ed made it funny!), or whatever. This is extremely silly, but so what? Ed clearly enjoys these scenes, and so does the child. The involvement of the CBBC viewer is a wonderful aspect of this show; it is totally different to anything else a child can do on CBBC, like participating in a gameshow or being a press packer for *Newsround*, and it's great to see how much fun Ed, Oucho and the child are clearly having.

Towards the end of the episode, Ed will get a call from "the Boss" to check on his progress. There follows a comical panic, which proves unfounded, because once Ed and Oucho get back to work on the invention they are finally able to finish successfully. There is then an extremely random song about what has happened in the episode, sung by Ed as a character who has got nothing to do with any of what has happened - like a nightclub singer, for example. Then finally, all that's left is to test the invention. We usually see that the invention, whatever it is, works well enough, but isn't necessarily practical. I can't see any of them coming into everyday use!

So what *are* these inventions? Well, here we come to my one small gripe about this show: the inventions are all rather samey. The basic idea is an everyday item like a bag or a jacket, adapted to play music, and/or release refreshments - things of that nature - and generally cater to the whims and lifestyle of the inventor. This is the show's one flaw, but you

know what? It doesn't even matter! Ed Petrie is a wonderful presenter,
Oucho is a wonderful puppet, and theirs is a wonderful show.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO
Knightmare Wipeout II

That connoisseur of fine gameshows, Challenge TV, never fails to provide me with inspiration for Knightmare puzzles, and this time the show I am shamelessly ripping off is Wipeout, the category-based general knowledge quiz presented by Paul Daniels, and later Bob Monkhouse. Each of the two grids below contains twelve answers, six of which fit into the category at the bottom and six of which don't. Identify all six correct answers if you can, chalking up cumulative amounts of theoretical money as you go (£10 for the first answer, £20 for the second, £30 for the third etc) up to a possible £210 for each grid, but just remember this - one wrong answer will wipe you out completely, so be careful!

Goblin	Mireman	Assassin	Hobgoblin
Wight	Medusa	Snake	Pooka
Wraith	Ogre	Ariadne	Skeletron

KILLED A DUNGEONEER

Ben III	Helen I	Sofia	Naila
Dickon	Nathan	Rebecca	Leo
Simon I	Alistair	Danny	Alan

REACHED LEVEL THREE

SCANDINAVIAN KNIGHTMARES: JÓN'S NOTES

<u>PROLOGUE</u>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE
<p><i>"Time turns, the fire burns!" exclaimed Treguard. (...)</i> <i>"Majida! ...MAJIDA!"</i></p>	<p>Almost immediately, there's the indication this is going to be no ordinary <i>Knightmare</i>. "Time turns, the fire burns", was, I think, a line only used by Treguard in series 1; Majida did not appear until series 7. Still, as she was there at the end, it is not too far-fetched to assume that Treguard would expect to see her in the antechamber when a new quest begun...</p>
<p><i>After the final quest she had retreated into her bottle for a bit more than six and one-half days...</i></p>	<p>Majida was almost universally disliked by <i>Knightmare</i> fans, so I had to find a way to get rid of her. As a genie, she came from a bottle in the first place - which she had been in for, in her words, "six and one-half days" (series 7, episode 1) - I couldn't let that one go unreferenced - so, logically, this was to be her way out as well.</p>
<p><i>...her mock somewhere-around-the-Mediterranean accent was fooling nobody.</i></p>	<p>Majida's accent was hammed up so much that if Paul Whitehouse and Charlie Higson were watching, she could have been offered a part in one of their <i>Chanel 9</i> sketches. Who's with me on this one?</p>

<p><i>Pickle (...) had long since departed to frolic and skip through the forest with the other elves...</i></p>	<p>Pickle was also not particularly welcomed in his first appearance in series 4, but was still more popular than Majida. The mere mention of elves always makes me think of the effeminate characters in the <i>Lord Of The Rings</i> films, and Luca Turilli's shockingly camp <i>The Ancient Forest Of Elves</i>, which is so cheesy it <i>should</i> be a hilarious parody of power metal... only it isn't!</p>
<p><i>...and make occasional appearances on British TV game shows involving extremely camp hosts...</i></p>	<p>You are all aware, are you not, that David Learner was a contestant on <i>Supermarket Sweep</i> in the late 1990s, well after the end of <i>Knightmare</i>.</p>
<p><i>Treguard realised he was on his own again, as he was always supposed to be. (...) As the rooms scrolled past, for the most part it resembled a series two dungeon...</i></p>	<p>By popular consent, the glory days of <i>Knightmare</i> were the first three series when Treguard had no assistant at all - so that's how it should be here. Series 2 is the one I have the strongest memories of, so I based the Dungeon on that series, with bits and pieces from series 1 and 3 where necessary.</p>

<i>Treguard looked in the mirror to see what appeared to be Merlin staring back at him.</i>	Treguard's aged appearance was partially based on what Hugo Myatt looks like now - grey hair, although no beard - plus what Dave Lister looked like in <i>Psirens</i> , the first episode of <i>Red Dwarf VI</i> , in which he'd grown an enormous beard and afro despite being in suspended animation for 200 years. In the 11 years between the final episode of <i>Nightmare</i> and these events, Treguard's hair has had a lot of time to grow and he has aged considerably...
<i>A jangly spell noise sounded - that's the proper jangly spell noise from the first two series...</i>	Series 3 is usually acknowledged to be the best of the lot, but something about it that wasn't right was the replacement of the classic jangly spell noise from the first two series with this strange "wheeeeeee... ting!" I never liked that - so I made sure the jangly noise was included for every single spell in this episode. In <i>this</i> reality, the jangly noise really does sound in a very real way...
<i>...some magic scissors appeared, complete with the twangy noises which usually accompanied a haunted sword.</i>	Haunted swords and axes were always accompanied by this noise, so why not scissors as well?
<i>...which made him look 25 years younger.</i>	Actually, he'd only have needed to be 17 years younger to match his appearance in series 2.
<i>"Spellcasting, B-R-O-O-M." (...) A magic broom appeared, sweeping away the pile of grey hair...</i>	Think of the broom that Mistress Goody was using in series 4 - the one that was obviously CGI.

<p><i>Treguard looked at them suspiciously. They all looked far too old to be appearing here... "Such old heads on young bodies," remarked Treguard. "Surely too old to be here?"</i></p>	<p>Treguard is correct to be suspicious. <i>Nightmare</i> contestants were all aged between 11 and 16; many had a dress sense which was unlikely to have been their own choice. Gunnar has just turned 16 at this point, and being the youngest member of their band by some considerable margin, is the only one in the regulation age bracket. The other three are all 20.</p>
<p><i>..."I'm sixteen, as are these two beside me. (...) We grow up and grow facial hair far faster than any other race in this world."</i></p>	<p>Øyvind is, as we all know, lying. Even if he had said he was 20, it would still have been barely believable that he would have a beard like a wizard. Only, as we are all aware, <i>This Is Norway</i> and the stereotypical image of the extremely hairy Viking is never far away.</p>
<p><i>"The greatest..."</i></p>	<p>Xander's racist tendencies are, as ever, never far away. Thor only knows what he would have made of Majida.</p>
<p><i>It was, of course, the original helmet...</i></p>	<p>Another sore point of the final two series was the altered design of the Helmet of Justice. It was so that SIGHT spells could be used to allow the dungeoneer to "see" normally through the helmet, via the use of an inserted Virtual Reality screen. This, of course, drew howls of derision as it completely defeated the point of the helmet! There was only ever one choice for which helmet I was going to use!</p>

<p><i>"I've seen this show before, you know."</i></p>	<p>How could Gunnar, a Norwegian, have seen a programme first broadcast on British TV before he was born? The answer should be obvious. I'm not going to repeat it here!</p>
<p><i>"The sooner we get started, the sooner we can all go down the p..."</i></p>	<p>He is, of course, referring to the pub. Which no <i>Knightmare</i> contestant could ever have gone near...</p>

<p><i>"You have forgotten the Eye Shield!" (...) "If you remember, it turned into the Shield of Freedom at the end of series seven." (...) "Discworld logic!"</i></p>	<p>The Eye Shield (the object, not this publication!) was not subjected to the merciless abuse directed at the Reach Wand or Majida, but was still seen by many as an unwelcome inclusion. It was introduced in series 4 - and as this is supposed to be a series 2 style Dungeon, I had to get rid of it. Gunnar, being as much of a know-it-all geek about <i>Knightmare</i> as he is about Tolkien, would instantly remember the rather ham-fisted conclusion of the legendary Barry Thorne's quest that brought series 7 to a close. Only, to make this permanent, the often-derided series 8 also had to be removed. I'd been reading a lot about the Discworld novels in the wake of Terry Pratchett's diagnosis with Alzheimer's Disease, and found the idea of "Discworld logic" in the Wikipedia article. This did the job <i>perfectly</i>, and also fits Gunnar's personality as Discworld is exactly the kind of fiction that would appeal to him in those rare times that he isn't obsessing over Tolkien.</p>
<p><i>...as well as the memory of Screeching Gideon...</i></p>	<p>This is the one problem with losing series 8 - the high-pitched hysterics of 12-year-old Gideon. Never mind the quests themselves, his hyperactive performances were the series' highlight.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM ONE: THE TEAM MEET FOLLY</u></p>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE
<p><i>"Where am I?" (...) "You're in a room." (...) "Yes, there's more, but I just wanted to stop my sentence there."</i></p>	<p>I lost count of the number of times a new scene starts with "Where am I?" and an adviser replies: "You're in a room..." whether it's a prison cell, a huge banquet hall or, in the later series, a forest.</p>
<p><i>As a portcullis crashed over the two doors at the side nearest to Gunnar... (...) The sound of Entombed was heard, loud and clear. It was a riff from their first album. (...) "Left Hand Path!" howled Håkon. (...) "Sidestep to your right, and again, and again... walk forwards..."</i></p>	<p>Imagine the standard four-doorways room used rather a lot in the early series of <i>Knightmare</i>. Number the doorways 1 to 4 from left to right; the portcullises drop over doors 1 and 2. Gunnar is standing to the left of centre, which explains why he has to sidestep <i>right</i> to take the <i>Left Hand Path</i> - which is door 3. Also... Entombed? Death metal in a kids' TV show? I remind you, <i>This Is Norway</i>. Even though Entombed are Swedish.</p>
<p><i>"Yes master, sorry master," Folly whimpered.</i></p>	<p>Folly <i>did</i> apologise to Treguard for being silly on at least one occasion, but these exact words were actually lifted from an episode of <i>Dangermouse...</i> in <i>Quark! Quark!</i>, The Quark had a robot servant called Grovel, and each time he required Grovel's services he would shout "GROVEL!" only for Grovel to... <i>grovel</i>, right in front of Quark, with the words "Yes master, sorry master..."</p>

<i>"Get on with it!"</i>	I'm sure you all know where <i>this</i> came from... but if not, the answer will be revealed later in the episode.
<u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM TWO: THE CLUE ROOM</u>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE
<i>"...it's the Level 1 clue room."</i>	Håkon recognises the Level 1 clue room straightaway. Other teams in series 2 and 3, who had seen it before, would still say something like "you're in a room, with a chequered floor, and there's a table..." as if they didn't know what it was.
<i>"You must find food here, for your lifeforce is low," (...) "But we've only just started!" (...) He looked at the screen to see the skull of condition red starting back at him..."</i>	The rules of the lifeforce clock were, in the real series, applied arbitrarily. On screen, it would run out in no time at all, but after five minutes spent in conversation with a wall monster, it would still be green. Fact is, it was applied to the screen in post-production. In this reality, I decided to make the advisers see it on screen... so I could have fun with its various effects. More about that later!
<i>Such thing as a laugh has never been witnessed by anyone on Øyvind's face.</i>	Not entirely true: Øyvind <i>does</i> smile and laugh, but the situation has to be at the extreme expense of someone he hates. Xander, for instance.

<p><i>"MY NAME IS NOT AMUSING!"</i></p>	<p>You may all remember that Granitas said this a couple of times in the first two series. I was considering having the team face Igneous, so that he could agrrrrrressively rrrrrroll his Rs rrrrrepeatedly in the text, but the chance to have them laugh openly at <i>that</i> name which <i>so obviously is amusing</i>, especially to those of the age that would have been watching first time round, was too much to turn down.</p>
<p><i>"...I've not felt less threatened since I saw that Brollachan in series seven."</i></p>	<p>The original wall monsters of the first three series really could finish off a dungeoneer even at this early stage - even if the notorious Akash and his clueless advisers in series 2 escaped by the skin of their retrospectively-awarded TRUTH spell. The Brollachan, on the other hand, could never have posed any such threat, as he did not know the answers to any of his questions...</p>
<p><i>The sound of a couple of thousand fingers on a couple of hundred keyboards typing their collective objection on the internet was audible in the background.</i></p>	<p>Controversy alert, part one! This is what I alluded to earlier, about how Gunnar could possibly have seen <i>Nightmare</i> in Norway. There is nothing more guaranteed to rile the <i>Nightmare</i> internet community into a foaming rage than the mere mention of pirate DVDs on eBay - so, of course, I put this in deliberately!</p>

<p><i>"You asked me a question, I gave you the correct answer, now what is your second?"</i></p>	<p>Controversy alert, part two! Only the second room of the quest and already there is an indication that this team are going to play by their own rules. Well... what were you expecting them to do?</p>
<p><i>"Who was the first hobbit to hold the ring?"</i></p>	<p>Although this question did appear in <i>Knightmare</i>, it was in series 3 and was asked by Golgarach. Scott (of "jump the gap... aaargh!" fame) was the recipient, his team gave "Bilbo Baggins" as the answer, and Golgarach accepted it. I'm no Tolkien geek, but when I saw that episode <i>after</i> the <i>Lord Of The Rings</i> films, I knew that was wrong. I thought it was Sméagol, but a few emails to some Tolkien geeks who are nearly as hardcore as Gunnar gave me the answer I was looking for.</p>
<p><i>"Now, I make that three truths in all... I command you!"</i></p>	<p>At this point, Treguard would prompt any team with three correct answers to call out "I command you" to the wall monster. Gunnar, of course, knows exactly what to do; <i>he</i> considers three riddles to have been answered here irrespective of what Treguard and Granitas might think!</p>

<i>Granitas disappeared to have a sulk and hoped not to encounter a gloating Olgarth who would never let him forget his ordeal.</i>	The rift between Olgarth and Granitas was well known to viewers of the first two series - even though nobody (including Treguard) could tell which was which as they were both played by Guy Standeven wearing the same mask...
<u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM THREE: GUNNAR MEETS MELLISANDRE</u>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE
<i>"And she's got really big..."</i>	Although she <i>doesn't</i> have really big... what Gunnar thinks Håkon is implying, there must have been some of the male teams at the upper end of the age bracket who will have had <i>some</i> highly inappropriate thoughts. And this is supposed to be kids' TV...
<i>"Hello, dungeoneer!" shrieked Mellisandre...</i>	Cue one of those "truth is stranger than fiction" moments. If Mellisandre had a catchphrase, it was "I'm older than I look... which is strange, because I never seem to get any older". Zoë Loftin, who played her, was about 18/19 at the time (although it seems Melly's mental age was considerably lower); she sent a picture of herself as a thirty-something to knightmare.com in the early 2000s... and other than having straighter and slightly blonder hair, hadn't changed a bit! See the evidence for yourselves.

<i>"She's going blind, you see..."</i>	No indication was ever given in series 3 of the state of Mrs Grimwold's eyesight, but she did marry an ogre...
<u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM FOUR: THE TRAP DOOR</u>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE
<i>"...there's a trap door on the floor." The urge to shout "Berk! Feed me!" fortunately bypassed them all.</i>	Anyone watching <i>Knightmare</i> at the time should also have been watching <i>The Trap Door</i> . I still have the entire series on VHS. "Oh, globbits. What's him upstairs want now?"
<i>"I wonder what might happen here..." commented Øyvind, turning to the camera. (...) "Now, who didn't see that coming?" retorted Øyvind to the camera again.</i>	This is an important development! <i>This</i> reality is a combination of real life - albeit a real life in which trolls, the Norse Gods and Viking ghosts really do exist - <i>and</i> a TV show. This is not so much breaking the fourth wall as an open admission that the fourth wall never existed in the first place. And there's going to be more - <i>much</i> more - about this later on...
<u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM FIVE: DEFEATING THE MECHANICAL WARRIOR</u>	
TEXT REFERENCE	NOTE

<p><i>"There are what appears to be three parts of a glowing disc, with some words on it..." (...)</i></p> <p><i>"There is a magical object in this room, but it's broken up and you'll need to pick up the pieces." (...)</i> ...and was immediately disturbed by the sound of whirring cogs.</p>	<p>Regular <i>Knightmare</i></p> <p>watchers may recognise this as an almost exact carbon copy of the situation "Jeehmeh!" from Leeds found himself in - trying (and failing) to pick up the pieces of the MEDAL spell while being chased by the Mechanical Warrior. He had no food to pick up, and the team weren't abominably slow in guiding him, but he was still forced to abort. I still say he should have been able to outrun the Mechanical Warrior and grab the spell pieces. Although, maybe backstepping to run behind the Mechanical Warrior wasn't allowed in the rules of the game? And was there some clever editing that removed some dithering from the advisers that might have sealed his fate? Either way, this is the cue for one of those "why didn't they..." situations highlighted in the initial note, and what they could or should have done...</p>
<p><i>"Team, you must make your exit fast or Gunnar will perish!" howled Treguard, his agitation getting too high for someone his age.</i></p>	<p>Treguard wasn't averse to the odd bout of hysterical hamming - especially in level 3 when there was a Medusa about. And we'll see that later...</p>

<p><i>Gunnar ducked as the Mechanical Warrior swung its mace in that awkwardly jerky way, with such force that it fell over in a heap of twisted metal. Being mindless and mechanical (as opposed to an actor in a costume, obviously) it was unable to get up again.</i></p>	<p>The Mechanical Warrior did once get a chance to draw back its mace, but not swing it to attack. This would surely have been the result - nullifying any threat it posed. How many of the regular teams would have thought of that? This is not, I continue to stress, a regular team!</p>
<p><u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM SIX:</u> <u>OLAF SNAKKE IKKE</u> <u>NORSK?</u></p>	
<p>TEXT REFERENCE</p>	<p>NOTE</p>
<p><i>His hair's the wrong colour...</i></p>	<p>Olaf's hair was a very Celtic shade of orange. On top of that, I was always convinced the Vikings fought with swords and axes, not a Captain Caveman-style bludgeon...</p>

<p><i>"Snakker du norsk?" (...) "Jeg snakke norsk... fordi jeg er norsk. Hva vil du?" (...) "Forstår du meg? Jeg ha gull, og en hammer. Ønske du gullet, eller ikke? Jeg vil ikke gir du hammeren. Det er min." (...) "Så, du er en viking men snakker ikke norsk? Det er latterlig."</i></p>	<p>One of the ideas that convinced me to write this episode in the first place was "what if Olaf actually met a team of Norwegians?" Of course, I had that team already made. In the main series of <i>Scandinavian Winters</i>, unless specifically pointed out, the Norwegians talk to each other in Norwegian, even though the text is written in English. As this is not the case here, the setting for this episode being a British TV programme, I had to specifically include some Norwegian dialogue. You may also be aware that my ability with the Norwegian language is... practically non-existent. As nobody from Norway is ever likely to be reading this, that's not such a problem. If you want to know what Gunnar is saying to Olaf, run it through Babelfish or Intertran. After all, that's how I made the Norwegian dialogue in the first place...</p>
<p><u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM SEVEN: THE TROLL</u></p>	
<p>TEXT REFERENCE</p>	<p>NOTE</p>
<p><i>"Ulrik! (...) What the hell are you doing in there! And get those stupid horns off your head!"</i></p>	<p>I admit that this room is something approaching filler, but it was the only way I could get a legitimate mention of Ulrik in the episode. He would have been absolutely no help to the advisers whatsoever.</p>

<p><i>He appeared to be humming Swedish lyrics to himself.</i></p>	<p>Håkon is the only one of the band members who would ever consider listening to Finntroll - the others would probably consider it untrøø and Not Black Metal Enough. Actually, Håkon's mild dithering here is based on an episode of <i>South Park</i> where Butters struggles to remember the password he's been given... and hums MC Hammer's <i>U Can't Touch This</i> to himself until he remembers: "HAMMERTIME!"</p>
<p><u>LEVEL ONE, ROOM EIGHT: THE WITCHES' CAULDRON</u></p>	
<p>TEXT REFERENCE</p>	<p>NOTE</p>
<p><i>"Eh?" she screeched at him. "What you got fer 'Eggatty, then, eh? Eh? Eh? (etc. ad nauseam)"</i></p>	<p>There were two <i>Nightmare</i> characters who drove me up the wall. Snapper-Jack was the worst of the lot, but Heggatty was a close second. The incessant "Eh? Eh? Eh?" on the end of every sentence, like a nervous twitch, was practically guaranteed to have me aim a brick at the TV. Gunnar's assessment of her is strikingly accurate.</p>
<p><i>...to the growing annoyance of everyone, including Treguard, the cameraman, and all the production crew, one of whom spilled his tea in frustration.</i></p>	<p>And there's the first mention of the production team behind the scenes - who we will be hearing a <i>lot</i> more about! I always wondered how some of them might react to several takes of a particularly irritating Snapper-Jack or Heggatty scene...</p>

<p><i>Håkon rose dramatically from his seat and raised his arm in the style of a Shakespearian orator.</i></p>	<p>Want to know where I picked this up from? Watch <i>Blackadder The Third</i>. Specifically, <i>Sense and Senility</i>, in which the actors Mossop and Keanrick attempt to teach the Prince Regent to stand much the way Håkon is standing here...</p>
<p><i>*thrrrrrrrp* (etc.)</i></p>	<p>Mildread's habit of slurping loudly at the end of each sentence was, surprisingly, nowhere near as irritating as Heggatty's incessant screeching. She was also a far more convincing witch - complete with warts, pointy nose and grey skin.</p>
<p><i>"For that I need goblins' toenail clippings, and I'm out of those. Can't get to Mrs Skarkill's beauty parlour until my broomstick's fixed. Broke down last week on the way back from Lillith's coffee morning."</i></p>	<p>What... what... WHAT? Skarkill is married? His wife runs a beauty parlour? Goblins have pedicures there... or <i>at all</i>? The notoriously unfriendly Lillith runs social events? And how could Mildread and Lillith even be at the same event when they were both played by the same actress? Heh. In this reality, anything goes!</p>

<p><i>...with that knowing look on his face that he was handing them the answer on a silver plate.</i></p>	<p>Treguard, in series 1, was strictly neutral - never giving the game away unless the team were completely clueless, in which case their quest would soon be finished anyway. During series 6 and 7, the theme of "us versus them" had escalated to the point where Treguard was actively helping several quests; every team in these two series survived level 1. It wasn't like that in t'old days...</p>
<p><i>...that strange electronic-barking noise...</i></p>	<p>You know the noise I mean - it sounded any time Mildread's cauldron was turned into a well. How else would you describe it?</p>
<p><i>"And don't you go holding your nose in there!"</i></p>	<p>Dungeoneer Richard, of the final team in series 1, very noticeably did this when dropping into level 2. In a way, I can let him off as those teams of the first series were effectively guinea pigs for the rest of the run.</p>

POETRY CORNER

Today we go back to series 5, to join Alex and his scholarly chums on their fairly impressive yet somewhat listless journey through the Dungeon.

This Chalfont team of scholars four
Were gentlemen, and quite demure.
In level one, and sunken room,
A pact with Hordriss soon did loom.
The Greenwood archer's questions three
Proved quite a test, but luckily
They got the password anyway,
Then turned Sly Hands into a fey.
Soon Skarkill caused a nasty fright,
Yet fled before the spellbound knight.
This timely rescue from Sir Hugh
Cleared up the path to level two.
A flight with Smirky did unfold,
Thanks to Elita's love of gold.
But then her voice was whisked away,
By means of Lord Fear's power play.
When Alex bagged the strident chord,
A useful word was his reward.
A dowsing rod revealed the key
To getting in to level three.
But then, alas, on causeway high,
Our hero soon would sadly die.
The scholars dithered just too long
And Alex fell, to clanging gong.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Knightmare Wipeout I:

Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct
WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct	Correct
Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT

Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct
WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct
WIPEOUT	Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT

Knightmare Wipeout II:

Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT
WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT
Correct	Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT

WIPEOUT	WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT
Correct	Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct
WIPEOUT	Correct	WIPEOUT	Correct